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CHRISTIAN MORAL THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD RELIGIONS

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John B. Chethimattam

RESPONSES

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JEEVADHARA

The Meeting of Religions

**CHRISTIAN MORAL THEOLOGY
IN THE CONTEXT OF WORLD RELIGIONS**

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Editorial

Rg Veda dating from at least the middle of the second millennium BC may be the earliest moral document of humanity. This classic text of Hinduism, contemporaneous with the Zend Avesta of the Iranians, centres around the ritual life of the Aryan race. Emerging from the magical conceptions of primitive humanity they consider the mythology of the Gods to be the model for human behaviour. The Gods, particularly the creator God, are the manipulators of the hidden primeval force of the universe, which was named *Rta*, the primitive flow of reality from its hidden womb. The Gods are at the same time children of *Rta* as well as its guardians. This hidden power of the magical word is on the one hand personified as the supreme Word, Brahman/Logos, and on the other, held as the norm for the actions of human beings. Man performing ritual sacrifice imitates the Gods and hence *karma*, the ritual action becomes the model for human behaviour. So long before there was any metaphysical consideration of the world and of the psychology of man there was the conception of the cosmic order revealing *satya* or truth, *śraddha* or faith and *dharma* or human duty. It was a world-centred morality, embracing man's quest for wealth, pleasure and righteous living. The Mimamsaka school of thought and the Dharmasastra representing this line of thinking did not attach much importance to *moksha* or liberation. The Vedantic metaphysics and the conception of a final liberation from this-worldly existence evolved it later from this early moral thinking.

The Hebrews leading a nomadic life in the Middle East had the vision of a personal Deity guiding them and deciding their destinies in their desert wanderings. So for them morality was established by a covenant or treaty with their clanish God who was eventually recognized as the Creator of heaven and

earth, and all the moral demands his personal precepts. Obedience to his commandments was the condition for his keeping the promises he had made to them. The Chinese pitched the norm for their life in the glorious tradition of their ancients. It was the essence of their authentic humanity and was guaranteed by a superior law, vaguely designated as Heaven. The supposition was that human nature by itself was good and those who followed the propriety of their nature as showed by the example of the ancients could not go wrong. Analytical and abstract rational thinking emerged from the quest of the Greeks who sought to discover the physis or immutable nature of things underlying their changing external appearances. This nature was identified with the form, as opposed to matter, the source of change and multiplicity. The form of all forms was the Good, the inspiration for both knowing and willing, the exercise of the highest faculties of man. Over against the shaky opportunism of politicians, sentimentality of poets and the limited competence in limited areas of craftsmen, Plato declares that goodness alone is the norm for right human living. This high ideal of goodness is mediated in human life through the intermediary ideas of prudence, justice, temperance and courage.

Contemporary moral thinking struggles to establish itself over against the above models. Except in the Hebrew pattern of experience, religion was only implicitly involved in the decision of right and wrong, duty and obligation. Moral theology in the proper sense of the term applied only to the Hebrew approach to the problem. For the Hebrews theology, discussion of God was response to his promises and the fulfilment of the terms of the covenant with him. But in other traditions too morality involved the deepest concerns of human existence and hence is essentially religious in character. In fact, with regard to content there is practically no difference between a 'theological' discussion of morals and other purely humanistic kind of ethics. The only difference is in the assignment of motivation for moral behaviour.

Hence the principal issue in moral theology today is how to maintain its distinction from philosophical ethics without mere repetition of the latter's contents. The variety of approaches to moral theology today found in theological schools

clearly shows the confusion and uncertainty in the matter. Some seminaries still continue the old Noldin-Genicot style of moral theology starting with an analysis of human actions and the conditions for moral responsibility. This purely philosophical approach to ethics is made 'moral theology' with ample quotations from the Bible and a legalistic interpretation of the Decalogue. But there is nothing strictly theological about this approach since the theological motivation is conveniently left out and relegated to the sphere of the Biblical scholar. This situation is not greatly improved by those who make 'love' the motivation for Christian moral action. After all, love is the exercise of the human will, the highest faculty of man, and it is the inspiration behind Plato's ethics.

Another extreme is presented by those who leave out all pretence of theology and reduce moral theology to mere practical guidance for action in the context of the human society, along with psychiatry and counselling. In this perspective ethics or ethos is the whole social language considered as the medium of human communication.

Such a position clearly denies the distinctive nature of Christian morality and the transformative nature of Christology. This cannot be said to be "theological" in any real sense of the term. The only way to make it theological is to assume the basic data of theology that in the present state of God's world there is only one order of human life, namely that of grace. In this order of grace in which man is effectively invited to be a partaker of divine life one can be authentically human only by being fully open to the movement of the Spirit. The so-called human autonomy is replaced by the law of the Spirit. Ever since the incarnation of the Son of God there cannot be any purely secular history. Human history itself becomes salvation history. Moved by the Spirit of Christ, for the Christian fundamental action is love, the nourishment and fullness of faith, the gift of oneself to the Other and to others, the basis and foundation of Christian praxis. If one leaves out this basic reorientation of human life by the positive self-disclosure of God in grace, there is no Christian moral theology.

The extremes present today in the thought of Catholic moral theologians show a confusion about fundamentals, not

merely about shades of meaning and application of principles in difficult cases. So the question we discuss in this issue of *Jeevadhara* is the distinctive character of Christian moral theology in the context of world religions. Our introductory article, "Christian Moral Theology" examines the evolution and present condition of Catholic moral theology. The text of this article was circulated among our leading moral theologians, and their representative reactions are presented after the article. As a background to this discussion Russell Hittinger of Fordham University, a leading scholar on Medieval ethics, explains "The Uncertain Legacy of Scholastic Ethics". This discussion of Christian morals has to be done in the Indian context against the background of the long tradition of Indian religions in the ethical field. Christopher Chapple of the Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles critically explores the different dimensions and traditions of Indian ethics. James Narithookil presents a brief review of Islamic Approach to Morality.

We hope this discussion, necessarily restricted by the limited space of the journal, will initiate a healthy discussion among all concerned. That the moral theologians of the Catholic seminaries in India have recently formed their own association is a move in the right direction to establish a uniform methodology and general consensus in the vital area of morality. The papers and discussions of their first meeting are soon to be published. Our only prayer is that the moral theology association should not go the way of other similar associations and remove this discipline from theology, which is the main inspiration for Christian morals.

John B. Chethimattam

Christian Moral Theology

One thing clear about Christian moral theology today is that it is in great confusion. Vatican II radically changed the vision of the Church as a static and institutional reality, a view on which the traditional casuistic and legalistic moral theology was based. Similarly presentday thinking has challenged the Greek perception of natural law as the foundation of all morality. A consistent and holistic moral perspective has not yet emerged. Some especially those in authority are desperately trying to hang on to the old order, and the divergent views of contemporary thinkers are struggling to establish common acceptance and credibility. What we see today is maybe the unravelling of a system built up from the sixteenth century and an attempt to build up a new Catholic moral perspective.

The old order

The simple fact behind the obsolescence of traditional morality is that it was to a great extent based on the patriarchal system and the more or less static nature of the social order. Church was very much identified with the hierarchy, and it was supposed to be present in its own instructions, rules and regulations than in the Gospel. Moral theology itself as a separate discipline is of relatively recent origin, dating only from the post-Tridentine concern to enforce moral laws. As John Mahoney says in his book¹, "the single most influential factor in the development of the practice and of the discipline of moral theology is to be found in the growth and spread of 'confession' in the Church".

Pope Innocent III in the Council of Lateran IV in 1215 imposed on the whole Church the obligation of 'Easter duties', namely of each one confessing to the priest all one's sins at least once a year, that is at Easter time. That regulation still continues in the Roman Code of Canon Law (can. 988-9).

Christian tradition had interpreted the power of binding given by Christ to the Apostles as the power to excommunicate the sinner, the first step in the discipline of penance, and the power of loosing as the power of reconciling the sinner to the community, the final step. Once the priest was empowered to act as a judge in matters of conscience he needed the proper knowledge regarding the nature and gravity of sin. In the aftermath of Lateran IV Raymond Penaforte complains, "many simple priests have the power, who have not the knowledge", and to remedy this he wrote his *Summa of Cases*, which remained a standard manual of moral theology for a long time.

This juridical and legalistic concern about the spiritual life of Christians was reaffirmed in the Council of Trent. Over against the Protestant slogans of "faith alone" and "grace alone" legalistic Catholic moral theology almost completely avoided speaking about faith and its fruits and about Christian virtues. The main purpose of post-Tridentine seminaries was to train competent "confessors". Forty years after the Council of Lateran IV Thomas Aquinas stated that what was important for the penitent was to present himself to the priest as to a physician and confess all the serious sins he could remember. Completeness of confession was more medicinal than juridical, since a physician needed to know all the ailments in order to treat a patient efficiently². But Trent insisted on the juridical obligation of the priest to know all the circumstances of the sin, its species and number in order to pronounce an appropriate judgment.

A moral theology geared to the practice of confession naturally generated a preoccupation with sin, a concentration on the individual and an obsession with law. The main concern of the pastorally minded confessor was man in his moral vulnerability needing help, warmth and meaning. Holy pastors like John Vianney and Cardinal John Henry Newman spent long hours of their priestly ministry in the confessional tending the wounds of sin of their devoted penitents. Mahoney remarks: "It was the Church's growing tradition of moral theology which was itself heavily responsible for increasing men's weakness and moral apprehension, with the strong sense of sin and guilt which it so thoroughly strove to inculcate or reinforce and the humiliation and punishment with which it drove its

message home."³ The pessimistic anthropology from which this moral theology started and which it served inevitably to confirm and reinforce itself, as particularly the isolation of morals from the rest of theology, made it an anomalous subject. Practically moral theology developed as a spiritual arm of the Church's legal system.

Investigation into the circumstances regarding the nature and number of grave sins, reflects a mentality in which objective morality seems to predominate over subjective guilt. It tends to instil or increase a pervasive sense of self-mistrust in the penitent. Similarly the analysis of the psychology of sin, varying degrees of knowledge, moral responsibility and gravity of matter all present a gloomy view of the human soul. This approach isolates a person in one's individual self, with very little emphasis on interpersonal relations, common endeavours and collective responsibility. Even in the well-developed sociology of the Church primary concern is about defending the rights of the individual. Moral theology was very individualistic in its choice and treatment of subjects. Exaggerated concentration on sexual sin is an indication of this individualism of moral theology. The effort of moral theologians was to foresee every eventuality in human behaviour and provide clear directives in every situation with very little effort to strengthen personal responsibility through the practice of virtue. They seem to have aimed at bringing into the field of moral behaviour the clarity and precision of canon law, defining exactly what constituted a mortal sin and what venial. Apart from applying these objective norms and prescriptions there was very little left to individual and collective discernment and to informed decision making.

Nature and natural law

The main reason for confusion in Christian moral theology today is a failure to critically evaluate the philosophical roots of present day moral thinking. As Alasdair MacIntyre explains in his influential treatise *After Virtue*, it is as if modern man after having completely lost the scientific system in which moral thinking was built up in antiquity, is trying to reconstruct it from scraps and vestiges without the vision of the ancients. The type of causality according to which one

tries to find the meaning of life and activity makes a great difference in the moral system one embraces. Plato with his theory of forms looked for the Good, the form of all forms, according to which moral behaviour had to be shaped. Aristotle shifted the emphasis to the final cause and the fulfilment of one's nature. The Stoics and the pragmatic Romans under the leadership of Cicero with their "natural law" theory made a clumsy effort to synthesize Plato and Aristotle. Hebrews had their eye on the efficient cause, the Creator of all things, whose commands formed the basis of moral obligation. The Indians looked to the material cause, the maternal womb from which all things emerged, as the source of binding moral law. Having lost the stomach for transcendental thinking, which all these four approaches involved, modern man is trying to build a system from below like the Sophists of Plato's times, taking man as the measure of all things. As a result morality has lost its binding character. It is very much an art, a course of action one undertakes to follow to express oneself, a personal resolve as a decision to stop smoking, and it implies only a weak obligation to be consistent with oneself.

For Plato the Good was the sun of the moral world. Just as the sun is the source of all light, energy and life, the Good is not only the norm to follow but the source of all intellectual dynamism both in knowledge and love. Over against the pretensions of Sophists, the diplomacy of politicians, the blind inspiration of poets and the practical knowledge of craftsmen, the Good, participated through the purifying virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and courage takes hold of the whole being of the philosopher. It discloses to him his own ignorance and makes him seek wisdom for its own sake. The human response to the Good is explained by Plato as the various expressions of love in the *Symposium*, as justice in the *Republic*, as piety in the *Euthyphro*, as courage in the *Laches* and in different ways in the other writings. In all, however, it is the compelling force of the Good, which is the basis of all human rational activity, that makes man do good under pain of making his life meaningless.

For Aristotle this transcendental Ideal had meaning and function only as the "object" of human activity: The immo-

vable Mover, Thought thinking itself, moved all things only by "being known and loved", as their final cause. But this good is found also, and perhaps primarily, in the organization of parts towards the attainment of the full development of nature. "For all are ordered together to one end, but it is as in a house, where the freemen are least at liberty to act at random, but all things or most things are already ordained for them, while the slaves and the animals do little for the common good, and for the most part live at random; for this is the sort of principle that constitutes the nature of each⁴. So for Aristotle the purpose of moral behaviour is the attainment of the goal of nature, its full developement, and in rational nature this is achieved through virtues.

The West, however, got its moral doctrine from the Stoics who took the Aristotelian idea of nature but invested it with the Platonic concept of participated good. According to Stoic teaching moral life is an exercise of man's reason in subordination to a higher principle of reason which pervades all of reality, not only as the seminal *Logos* but also as the principle of the evolution and elevation of all things. This divine cosmic and human order naturally held a great fascination for Christians. For Augustine it appeared as "the divine reason or the will of God commanding the natural order to be respected and forbidding its disruption"⁵. That there is a perfect order out there was taken for granted. "Peace of all things is the tranquility of order." Existence of evil and disorder was just explained away: "Order is the arrangement of equal and unequal things giving to each its own place"⁶. To this Stoic idea of order was added the key ideas of Roman Law, *jus naturale*, the basis of *jus gentium*

Thomas Aquinas gave the natural law theory its full and systematically articulated expression⁷. Nature and purpose of things as they are in themselves express the mind of the Creator. Eternal law is manifested in natural law. So any action that violates the order established in nature is a violation of the will of the Author of nature, and so any one who knowingly and willingly performs them breaks his friendship with God. This is the essence of sin. So there are certain actions by their very nature wrong, like blasphemy and killing of an innocent person. With the renewal of Thomism in the 19th century under Pope Leo

XIII the natural law theory became the stock "solution" to every problem in the field of morality in the Catholic Church.

Both Augustine and Aquinas had, however, clearly noted the imperfection and inadequacy of the natural law theory. First of all, by the very fact nature is created, it is imperfect. There cannot be any perfect order in nature; physical evil is an expression of its inherent limitation and moral evil shows the weakness and limitation of the created will. Secondly the very concept of nature is an abstraction by the human mind from the concrete existential order, which is full of anomalies and contradictions. Even what is discernible cannot be fully grasped by the human mind. So Aquinas readily admits that the very elucidation of the natural law in its fullness requires divine revelation⁸. Augustine had a certain distrust of nature itself: "This is true of everything created; though it is good, it can be loved in the right way or the wrong way – in the right way, that is, when the proper order is kept; in the wrong way, that is, when that order is upset." Besides, virtue does not come from man. "Those who are endowed with true piety and who lead a good life..attribute to the grace of God whatever virtue they may be able to display in this present life, because God has given those virtues to them in response to their wish, their faith and their petition."⁹ Aquinas sees in this Augustinian appeal the need for a supernatural resource in an Aristotelian key, stating that to be salvific the moral virtues have to be informed by charity. Thus Thomistic morality came to be a two-tier activity, first natural according to the perception of reason, and then supernatural added over it. "Supernatural" was a concept introduced into Western thought in the 9th century through translations of Pseudo-Dionysius who meant by it something referring to a superior being. It was theologically exploited by Aquinas, as the salvific dimension added to our natural mode of activity. So 'nature' became a residual concept, what is left over after abstracting divinizing grace. But at present there is only one order: man's whole spiritual life is penetrated by grace, and that life takes place within God's will for human salvation. As the Apostles declared in their missionary discourses, with the resurrection of Christ there is a new cosmic order in which there is no other name except that of Jesus for people to attain salvation. Superna-

tural is existential; it is impossible to filter out a nature. On the other hand, as Mahoney states, 'so far as content is concerned, there is nothing specifically distinctive about Christian ethics as compared, for instance with the best of humanist ethics'¹⁰.

Developments in the western perception of Ethics in the modern period were aimed at facing two challenges posed to philosophy, first the shift of emphasis from objective nature to the conscious subject, and second the great progress made in empirical sciences. David Hume, Diderot and others noted with dismay the impossibility of attaining in ethics and religion the clarity and certainty achieved in mathematics and physics. So Hume highlighted the so-called naturalistic fallacy, of jumping from descriptive statements to prescriptive statements. According to him the leap from "is" to "ought" was unwarranted. All that was possible to conclude from this empiricist approach was the utilitarian attitude of the British elite of the age, that one had to strive in one's behaviour to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Since one could never fully foresee the consequences of one's actions nor measure the resulting pleasure or pain, this could not ground any real moral obligation. Reacting to this claim of the empiricists and actually admitting it, Emmanuel Kant thought that the only way to save morality was to take it completely outside the empirical field and reserve it to practical reason. After all, truth and good are not characteristics of the material world nor of the sense experience of man, but solely of the rational understanding and of the will. Will is the faculty of good as sight is of light and colour. So the one norm of morality is the categorical imperative of practical reason, and one should act in such a way that one's personal maxim of action should be the universal maxim. In fact, the deontologism of Kant which intuited moral principles was a return to Plato's theory of Good as the form of all forms. But when he restricted the good to practical reason, the counterpart of pure reason, he fell far short of Plato: Plato's Good was all embracing, the source of reason itself, and it translated itself through the intermediary ideas and virtues into all aspects of concrete human existence. Hence the whole life, with all the expressions of human love was a pursuit of wisdom, and it was the object

of the discourse of philosophy. For Kant and, to a certain extent, Hegel the universal will and law were intuited and imposed categorically on human life.

With the shift of emphasis from nature to consciousness the antinomy between freedom and determinism became the crucial question in morality: How can human beings be part of the natural order and still be free and morally responsible? Most moral philosophers simply ignore the problem of causal determinacy and present 'natural law' as a response to the problem of freedom in a morally-indeterminate universe. They separate ontology from morality. But the problem does not go away, but reemerge as the antinomies of deserts and entitlement, and liberty and equality: Deserts imply moral responsibility and freedom, while entitlement and equality mean justice both towards the individual as well as in the social order.

To solve this problem writers like Germain Grisez and John Finnis distinguish two levels of practical reason, one pre-moral revealing the determinate nature and the other formally moral, the challenge to human freedom. The first principle of practical reason that good is to be done and pursued and evil to be avoided, does not mean morally good or morally evil, but whatever is intelligibly worthwhile. Even immoral actions can have an intelligible purpose. Such intelligible goods are categories of life, knowledge, play, aesthetic experience, sociability, practical reasonableness and religion. The first principle of morality is a direct challenge to human freedom: Choose and otherwise will those and only those possibilities whose willing is compatible with integral human fulfilment. All moral rules are specifications of this first principle. But this integral human fulfilment is not a subsistent idea like the Platonic Good, but an imaginable ideal providing the standards by which choices may be made. This will have to take into account all the psychological and sociological variables that contribute to the integral fulfilment of a human life. But the problem with this descriptive approach to the ideal of human fulfilment is how it can create a binding obligation on the human will, which is the faculty of all good and infinite good, while all the goods presented to human choice are finite in themselves.¹¹

Covenantal ethics

The unique contribution of the Hebrew tradition to morality is the interpersonal frame-work in which all moral laws were conceived. Moral law is a treaty or covenant established by God in the style of Middle Eastern monarchs, who benevolently promised to do certain things for their people provided the latter fulfilled certain conditions. But the first instalment of that covenant was the creation of man, the partner to the covenant. When one stands as a child before one's creator and father, all that one is and all that one has appear as gift, grace and love. Even the natural laws are given as precepts of the One Who Is: "Thus says the Lord". Moral obligation is presented as an invitation to imitation: Yahweh is a moral God. He protects the widow, the orphan and the alien, and so the people also are called to follow his example and show justice, love and compassion to one's fellow human beings.

The most dramatic changes taking place in Catholic moral theology today are, to a great extent, due to a return to Biblical personalism¹².

1) The purpose of moral theology is not seen as preparing confessors, with emphasis on specific acts in order to judge whether or not these are mortally sinful. Instead moral theology is seen as a holistic reflection on the life of a person, including the call to the fullness of love, and not merely concentrating on the border line between sin and virtue. So naturally there is a movement away from the perspective of traditional manuals of moral theology seeing life in terms of obedience to law—divine law, natural law and human law. Even the teleological model of Aquinas evaluating everything in the light of the ultimate end is unintelligible to the modern mind and mostly irrelevant to life today. In its place primacy of charity as the formal element in moral theology is appreciated by all. The basic rule of the Bible is to love God with one's whole heart and love one's neighbour as oneself. Since the initiative is from the part of God, the creator and saviour, moral life has to be a response to the gift and call of God. "Love one another as I have loved you", said Christ. So the golden rule is "Do to others as you want them to do to you".

2) So moral theology appears as a genuine theological

discipline. Rather than being a series of conclusions drawn from ontology or from human psychology it appears as the axiological response to the call of God. Coming from the Author of all things, that call touches the core of one's existence, leaving intact, at the same time, one's individuality, and freedom to respond or not to the divine generosity. In Christianity this theology becomes Christocentric: The call comes not through finite things nor particular events, which by themselves cannot have a divine and compelling character. It comes to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh. So it is divine and at the same time fully human.

3) From this Christocentric perspective arises the social dimension of morality: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you that you may go and bring forth fruit". The lives of the faithful are incorporated into the vine that is Christ. The governing principle of moral theology is not man's reason, but the faith through which are revealed Christ and the salvation he brings to all humanity. So individual conscience and individual salvation have to be seen in the context of the total economy of human salvation. Moral theology only explores and explains the implications of the practical side of faith that calls for the building up of humanity into one family of God. So, as Christ explains, true morality has to go beyond the self-righteousness of scribes and pharisees.

4) Wholeness is the main concern of this moral theology. Traditional morality concentrated on the faculties of man and their specific functions. Thus lying is morally wrong because it is a misuse of the human speech, the inherent purpose of which is to communicate truth, and all sexual sins were lumped together as abuse of the sexual faculty intended by God for procreation of children. In the Biblical perspective man is a relational being: In communion with the world he is flesh, in himself he is psyche, and in communion with God he is spirit. Human characteristics and faculties should be viewed either within the bodily totality or within the totality of the human person. Only in the totality of relations may something be judged to be right or wrong, sin or virtue.

5) Breaching of absolutes and the incorporation of consequences is another drastic change in contemporary moral

theology resulting from the return to Biblical personalism. Many types or classes of moral acts were by their very nature judged to be sinful that even God could not permit them. Such were lying, suicide, abortion, sterilization, masturbation, premarital and extramarital sex and divorce. Similarly St. Thomas distinguished between the primary precepts of natural law, that were completely unchangeable, and the secondary precepts deriving thence as changeable. But Aquinas himself admitted that though the good and the just are formally the same everywhere, materially taken they may vary according to the "mutability of man's nature and diversity of conditions"¹³. An action the same in its metaphysical essence may change radically according to its position in the interpersonal context. Thus "the physical reality of killing can be as intersubjective reality, murder, waging war, self-defense, the death penalty or resisting insurrection depending on the circumstances, especially depending on the reason (*ratio*) for which the act is done"¹⁴.

6) A pluralism of moral theology is another phenomenon of this Biblical perspective. Bible does not present a search for truth like the dialogues of Plato, but the celebration of a common faith, a common experience. In the search for truth different approaches and methods may not be equally valid and they may not be complementary. But when one proceeds from a shared faith and vision different ways of expressing and communicating it can make a positive contribution towards making it relevant and practical. So different theologies are not detrimental to truth but rather a positive asset.

Morality beyond religion

In the perspective of a pluralism of moral theology mentioned above against the background of the Biblical perspective, Indian religious traditions have their own special style of thinking and expression. Indian religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism in particular are realization religions. For them salvation is not something to be imported and brought in from the outside, but already present demanding only to be realized. According to Hinduism the root of bondage and suffering is the lack of knowledge of the Atman, the Self of one's own self. Buddhism thinks that the present phenomenal existence is full of suffering, arising out of human desire; that can be prevented

by the exercise of the eightfold path and the attainment of *nirvana*, the realization of the emptiness of all things. Jainism believes that the self of man is the infinite knowledge and power already existent, but restrained and hidden by an external coating produced by the actions of man. So salvation is realizing what is already present. Hence the scope of the moral law is to remove the barriers and make manifest the authenticity of one's existence. A morality, therefore, based on faith experience as the Christian Gospel, has a good deal to learn from the Indian moral thinking, particularly to make faith relevant to the Indian context.

1) The Indian pattern of thinking by itself provides a distinctive mode of expression to Christ's message. In the whole Oriental quest for salvation, the contrast is not between soul and body, spirit and matter as in the Greek tradition, but between the eternal and the temporal, the immortal and the perishable.

2) In the place of the distinction between the ideal and the physical, Eastern realism sees the Transcendence by the very reason of that transcendence immanent in the heart of every being. Creation is shot through and through by the presence of the Creator.

3) The principal function of morality is discernment. Evil itself is not a mere negation or privation but a positive force that obstructs and hides the good. So the morally conscientious man carefully discerns right from wrong, good from bad and promotes what is good and positive. Sin is duplicity and right behaviour is keeping on the straight path. Right knowledge is compared to a boat by which one crosses over the sea of falsehood. The reason for this need of vigilance is that the straight path between the opposites of good and evil, right and wrong is rather subtle. Scripture and the example of good people constitute the easily available norm for such discrimination between what is acceptable and what should be rejected.

4) The proper field of moral principles and obligations is that of social relationships with particular reference to the special stage of one's life. Morality is not a law imposed from the outside but something that rises from the nature of life itself. The individual is the proper responsible agent. But the

individual has to be seen in the bosom of the community, as formed by the collective experience of faith and the empowerment received from the Spirit.

5) Society itself should not be conceived as the field of competition between the haves and the have-nots, the conflict between masters and slaves, the class war between the oppressed and their oppressors. Of course, society consists of unequal members. But the Indian social system "does not consist only in the unequal distribution of the means of production, but also and more particularly, in other aspects: it institutes an interdependence between those who dispose of these means and those who do not, an interdependence which is in the end to the advantage of the latter. The rich depend on the poor to a certain extent, thanks to the ritual aspect". (Louis Dumont).

6) Perhaps the most distinctive character of Indian personalistic ethics is that it is not dominated by a teleological orientation towards an absent and distant goal, nor by an external unifying plan provided by a creator God. Morality is the measure in which the various pursuits in life reflect and represent the authentic self of man. This self is manifested, not only in the spiritual principles and ideals like truth and non-violence, but also in the quest for material wealth and bodily pleasure. Since the whole life is a sort of self-education and self-discovery the final phase of it has to be liberation from the present state of the subordination of the spirit to bodily existence, a process by which the spirit returns to its own authentic independence and the body becomes subordinate to it as its manifestation. The compelling character of the moral law comes from the fact that by violating it, one violates one's authentic self, becomes a contradiction within oneself, which is the essence of hell!

What can be done ?

Moral Theology gives practical guidance in life to believers. Hence it is very urgent that the confusion and uncertainty in present-day moral theology should be forthwith cleared up. The atmosphere of controversy and confusion is created by the unresolvable divergence among particular systems based on local philosophies. Utilitarianism, consequentialism,

pragmatism, naturalism and deontology are all clearly reflected in contemporary moral theology books, with only a few Biblical texts serving as a sort of umbilical chord to claim the name of theology. There is no reasonable hope that the disagreement among these systems can be cleared by discussion in the foreseeable future. They are all objectivist systems viewing morality as an independent framework of objects, actions, faculties and natures with very little consideration of the conscious human person that stands behind them. In fact, Greek philosophy never had any reasonable understanding of the category of the person! As Edmund Husserl remarked in one of his last works, objectivism is the Original Sin for which the West has been condemned to cultural sterility.

The solution to this state of affairs is to bring moral theology back into the framework of theology and the personalist context of the Bible. Any reasonable moral theology can be conceived only with faith in God's involvement with humanity in history and the belief in God's aggressive love for all persons particularly for the victims of society¹⁵. As James M. Gustafson says, "An experience of the reality of God in one or more of its modes can well alter the purpose and directions which actions take, with full recognition that there are 'pre-religious' and 'pre-moral' factors involved in the determination of the purposes and of the actions which follow"¹⁶.

On the other hand any moral theology worth its name has to be universal and interreligious. As far as content is concerned there is no difference between Christian morality and morality for other people. Today there is only one order of salvation for all humanity and that is the order of grace. So any moral theology intended for the Indian people should incorporate in it all the positive insights and emphases of Indian religions. Catholic moral theology has to be truly catholic, which means embracing God's plan of salvation for all God's children.

Foot Notes

1. *The Making of Moral Theology, A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1987
2. *Summa Theologica*, Suppl. q 6,a.3 & ad 3m.,
3. *lc.* p. 28
4. *Metaphysics*, Bk XII, ch. 10
5. *Contra Faustum*, 22, 27, PL 42, 418
6. *City of God*, XIX, 13,1
7. *Summa la 2ae* q.90 & 91
8. *Summa Contra Gentes*, I, 3-7
9. *City of God*, Bk.XV, ch. 22.
10. *l.c.* Helmut Thielicke (*Theological Ethics*, Vol. 1. Foundations ed. Wm. H. Lazareth, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966) develops the same idea in a slightly different manner; We cannot even begin to say what our Christian message is "unless we first see man in his secularity, unless we interpret the world of man, and therewith lay bare the theme which is of concern both to Christians and to secular men" (p.xvii). Secularization has liberated the world from the straight jacket of so-called "Christian" states and customs. "It has attempted to organize and constitute itself exclusively on the basis of factors already inherent within itself. As a result, we have been able for the first time to see clearly what the world really is."(p.4) "The specifically "Christian" element in ethics is rather to be sought explicitly and exclusively in the motivation of the action.' (p.20) The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees is that they are blameless at the level of the acts, i. e., outwardly, but they act on the basis of ossified legalism and feverish casuistry (p.21).
11. Richard A. McCormick, S.J., "Moral Theology 1940-1989: An Overview", *Theological Studies*, vol.50 (1989) 3-24. Closely allied to this approach is what is known as "proportionalism" strongly defended by great many authors including Bernard Haring, Charles Curran and Peter Knauer S.J., but strongly opposed by many including Benedict Ashley O.P., Germain Grisey, John Finnis and Joseph Boyle. It is a method for determining the morally right and wrong in concrete human conduct. It holds that the causing or permitting of evils in our conduct is morally right or wrong depending on the presence or absence of a commensurate reason. When such a reason is present, the intention bears on it, not on the evil and therefore the evil remains indirect. But this almost verges on the old opinion that the end justifies the means.
12. One cannot forget here the different meanings given to the term "person". Concept of person in Phaenomenology is somewhat different from the Biblical concept of the person. Prof. Louis Janssens who introduced personalist thinking into ethics places the emphasis on action: To act is to choose, and to choose to renounce. So

omission is at the heart of action. That omission has to be justified in reference to the person who is the agent and person's relation with others. See, Joseph A. Selling (ed.) *Personalist Morals: Essays in Honour of Prof. Louis Janssens*, Bibliotheca Ephemerides Theolog. Louvaniensium 83 Leuven, Univ. Press, Peeters, 1988

13. *De Malo*, q 2, a 4, ad 13m
14. Richard A. McCormick S.J. *Theol. Studies* 44 (1983) p. 84. The impact of Liberation Theology on Moral Theology is a good example of the approach to morals from the concrete situation of man. First of all it demolishes the separatist mentality that Christian realities are essentially other worldly. Faith should not be an abstract doctrine but should by its very nature action-oriented. It provokes all Christians to participate actively in the construction of a just order. Gospel has to be addressed directly to the actual problems of man here and now. This concrete human being, his immediate concerns and needs cannot be properly understood without recognizing his openness to God and to other human beings.
15. John C. Bennett, *The Radical Imperative From Theology to Social Ethics*, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975
16. *Can Ethics be Christian*, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975 p.55

Responses to J. B. Chethimattam's Article

1. Christian moral theology

Last October a good number of moral theologians in India met together at Madras to launch an Association of Moral Theologians and also to reflect on the theme of Social Sin. There was little evidence of the old 'objectivist' or 'casuistic' mentality. On the other hand, there was remarkable convergence regarding the need for developing a more socially oriented moral theology. This shows that many moral theologians are moving out of the traditional straight jacket. Still, this does not mean that all is well. In some seminaries, the courses are still ordered according to the commandments and moral theology seems little different from canon law with the predominance of legalism. In others, there is a lot of confusion between the old and new trends, which leaves the normal student confused. So there is no doubt about the urgency of clarification and updating.

In this context, the paper of Chethimattam is to be welcomed. It is remarkable for its freshness and multi-disciplinary approach. No doubt it is highly stimulating.

Chethimattam does well in showing how the limitations of traditional moral theology are bound up with a dependence on the Greek view of the 'natural law' and its origin as a separate discipline from the need to provide guidelines for confession. From this a certain degree of 'naturalism', 'legalism' and a 'sin oriented negativism' could be expected.

But he does not seem to have sufficiently recognized the merit of Thomas Aquinas in going beyond the Stoic or mechanical model of the natural law. I wonder whether Thomistic morality, at least as found in the *Summa Theologica*, could be called a 'two-tier' activity, first natural and then supernatural. Aquinas was well aware that now there is only one existen-

tial order. The defects of late scholastic moral thinking could be attributed to the Nominalism of the time. The crucial distinction, made by Aquinas between the 'primary principles' of the natural law which are immutable, and 'secondary principles' which are contingent and mutable deserves more attention.

It is true that the natural law theory had become largely mechanical and rigid in the course of centuries, because of which Catholic moral theology seemed to have lost its specific Christian character. No wonder then that Vatican II prescribed: "Special attention needs to be given to the development of moral theology."¹ Vatican II itself has provided, however briefly, the key to the renewal of natural law theory by declaring that the moral aspect of any procedure, (in the context, for the responsible transmission of life), should be based "on the *nature of the human person and his acts*"².

This indication has led to a vigorous debate concerning the meaning of the natural law. While some have held to a traditional understanding, an increasing number of theologians³ have been suggesting that the moral evaluation of a human act has to be based on its personal character. The personal intention, according to them, holds priority over the objective nature of the act. Thereby, the way is open for a more flexible, and, what is thought, personal moral decision-making process. The traditional view has been dubbed 'physicalist' or 'biologist'. For some time, it looked as if this trend had won out. There did not seem to be any more room for 'moral absolutes' concerning particular human acts. The regular 'Notes on Moral Theology' in *Theological Studies* seemed to confirm this.

However, the Magisterium has never approved of the questioning of moral absolutes in matters like contraception, abortion, and pre-marital intercourse. In fact, there has been a polarization, between supporters and opponents of moral absolutes. Just now, the pendulum seems to be swinging even to the other side. While the moderns called the old view 'physicalist', the resurgent traditionalists have now begun to dub the newer view 'dualist'. The modern view, according to them, neglects the essentially incarnational dimension of all human life and activity. The human body and its basic functions are

not an *instrument*, but the *icon* of the spirit. Violating, for instance, the intrinsic link between the love-expressing and life-giving aspects of the conjugal act would imply, not only modifying natural and physical processes, but also offending the very dignity of the human person. Human generation would thereby become merely physical reproduction and not human procreation.

So now we are witnessing increasingly a defence of some basic traditional positions from the standpoint of 'personalism' itself. The trend was initiated in the West by such writers as William E. May. Now, it has received a boost, not only from official pronouncements by and under Pope John Paul II, but by the gradual publication of the works of Karol Wojtyla into English and other languages.⁴ The Pope derives his personalism first from Aquinas. But he has been influenced by phenomenologists like Husserl and Max Scheler.

Needless to say that the repeated and emphatic statements of the Magisterium cannot just be ignored. One should note the change in perspective and argumentation in the more recent documents.

So the problem is much more complicated than what Chethimattam makes out. I would agree with him when he says that we must go beyond the systems of utilitarianism, consequentialism, pragmatism, naturalism and deontologism of contemporary moral theology. The opposition between consequentialism, (proposed by many in the form of 'proportionalism'), of the moderns and the deontologism of the traditionalists is hard to resolve⁵.

While the analysis of the situation presented by Chethimattam is incomplete, his main proposals are worthy of note:

- 1) There is need for developing a *covenantal ethic* based on biblical ethics, (although it would be far from easy to derive concrete conclusions from this approach). Biblical personalism must by all means be stressed. This would answer the call of Vatican II to develop a more genuine Christian moral theology.
- 2) Such an ethics would appear as a genuine theological discipline. It would necessarily be *Christocentric* as Chethimattam would wish⁶.

3) The biblical and Christological foundations would lead to a *social perspective*, transcending the individualism of the past. This is a crucial need of the moment when we have realized the pervasive influence of oppressive structures calling for liberation. This would be inspired by the liberative dimension of the mission and message of Jesus. A moral theology developed according to this orientation will avoid legalism and casuistry and would be pre-occupied with human dignity and human rights. Still, it must be noted that the human rights paradigm, however valid, arose from Western history and concerns. It needs to be balanced by the basic need for liberation as experienced by the oppressed classes. This has been very well brought out in an illuminating article by Aloysius Pieris⁷.

4) Lastly, a moral theology for India must integrate the best insights of *Indian religious tradition*. Chethimattam has made some interesting suggestions in this regard. We can profit from the more immanent and integral view of Indian tradition. But I do not see what is meant by the "distinctive character of Indian personalistic ethics" or what is "Indian personalism". Inter-dependence, in the Indian social system, between various classes, is good as far as it goes. But does this mean that the caste and social stratification with its inherent oppressive features is to be tolerated any longer? Not to mention Islamic (Arabic - Persian) and imported Western Christian traditions it would not be easy to harmonize Advaitic, Bhakti and Dalit traditions.

Chethimattam's vibrant piece will surely make many people reflect and to that extent can contribute to the renewal of moral theology, especially in the seminaries. "It is very urgent", he says, "that confusion and uncertainty in present-day moral theology should be forthwith cleared up". Would to God that this could be accomplished 'forthwith'! But maybe we have to live with the confusion for a long time. However, this should not be in a passive or fatalistic way, but accepting the challenge of facing a creative tension between conflicting viewpoints so that clarity may gradually emerge. Meanwhile, we have to promote greater maturity among the people in order

that they might be able to face divergent trends in a responsible way.

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Foot Notes

1. Decree *Optatam Totius* on Priestly Formation, N. 14.
2. Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World, N. 51. **Emphasis added.**
3. For instance, Bernard Haring, *Morality is for Persons*, London, Vision Book, 1972.
4. James J. McCartney, *Unborn Persons: Pope John Paul II and the Abortion Debate*, New York, Peter Lang, 1987.
5. I have attempted a resolution of this vexed question in "Moral Absolutes: Towards a Solution", *Jeevadhara*, 12 (1982) 455-469; this is also found in my book *Moral and Pastoral Questions*, Anand, Gujerat Sahitya Prakash, 1985.
6. For the development of a Christocentric morality, see particularly works of Josef Fuchs and Bernard Haring.
7. "Human Rights Language and Liberation Theology", *Vidya Jyoti*, 52 (1988) 522-536.

2. Present outlook is better !

The remarks on the traditional natural-law-based moral theology are on the whole pertinent. There is also a brief comment on the source of the characteristics of the present-day Catholic moral theology, inspired by biblical personalism. The call for ecumenical and interreligious efforts at theologizing is also welcome and timely.

However I do not think that the present day Catholic moral theology is in "great confusion". Today it has definitely a sense of direction and perception of its task guided by the basic moral message of the Bible, especially the New Testament, insights from the Vatican Council and the rich experience of its own tradition. This is not any reason, of course, for com-

placency, for we have to work on to “complete” the task of *aggiornamento*.

Interreligious efforts in ethics, especially in India, would be good. Here the question of the ‘specificity of Christian morality’ is very important. Unless the issue is well clarified, it will lead to confusion. The article quotes Mahoney to show that content-wise Christian morality is not specifically distinct from human morality. Does the ‘content’ refer only to the objective demands and norms of the two moralities or also to the mode and clarity with which the content is presented (e. g. in revelation and in human nature) and to the awareness with which the content is received by the people? In other words, the nuances centering on the ‘content’ should also be clarified, especially in the interreligious context.

I think the paper completely leaves out Proportionalism which has been much discussed in contemporary Catholic moral theology. Catholic moral theology should also, be more ‘adult’, getting rid of paternalistic attitudes and directives, and also ‘contextualized’.

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3. Diversity of opinions and a certain pluralism are healthy

The paper is well written and gives a clear picture of the shift in focus from a traditional moral theology intended to guide confessors, to a contemporary moral theology characterized by a return to biblical personalism. I would like to call attention to a recent article by Richard A. McCormick in the March issue of *Theological Studies*¹. In it, McCormick reflects on the significant developments in moral theology in the last fifty years and indicates where we are now, and also suggests directions for the future. I think, it is well worth reading.

There are just a couple of things that I would like to point out.

1. A large number of published authors and some of the best-known names in moral theology today are proportionalists. According to proportionalism, causing certain disvalues, or ontic or nonmoral or premoral or physical evils, as variously rendered by these authors, does not in itself make the action morally wrong. The action becomes morally wrong when there is no commensurate or proportionate reason for it. Basically proportionalism is an approach that reflects consequentialism. And as John R. Connery, Germain Grisez and others have warned, consequentialism is difficult to establish in theory and dangerous to apply in practice².

2. I am not an expert in Indology or in Indian Religions and feel rather incompetent to dabble in this area. But permit me to point out one thing. I fully agree that moral theology must be ecumenical and interreligious. And so we should incorporate in it all the positive values, insights and emphases of other religions. But there seems to be one major difficulty. The article says that Indian ethics is "not dominated by a teleological orientation towards an absent and distant goal, nor by an external unifying plan provided by a creator God. Morality is the measure in which the various pursuits in life reflect and represent the authentic self of man". This is precisely the difficulty. Moral life according to Indian religions appears to be purely a human pursuit. The emphasis is on the self. It is the self that acts, it is the self that tries to attain knowledge of the Atman, it is the self that attains *moksha* or *nirvana*. In other words, the grace aspect is not only not emphasized but almost entirely neglected. I think we need to balance or correct that with concepts from Christian theology shaped by the fact that Jesus is God's incarnate self-gift. For, as McCormick rightly points out, "The very gift of God in Jesus shapes our response — which means that the central and organizing vitality of the Christian moral life and moral theology is the self-gift we call charity"³. A morality that does not emphasize this important dimension of divine invitation and self-gift would tend to be excessively subjective, and one-sidedly a human pursuit.

3. Regarding teaching of moral theology in seminaries deep concern is expressed: "There is no unity nor uniformity in the method and approaches to moral problems, not to talk about any unanimity in the solutions to problems". But perhaps in varied degrees, such has always been the situation in, the Church history of theology including that of moral theology would testify to that. There were different approaches, different theories and different opinions in different schools of thought. The opinions of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, say for instance, on original sin or marriage are not the same. Thomas Sanchez admitted parvity of matter in the domain of sex, while the official position or common teaching those days was to deny the same. Furthermore, the history of moral theology during the 17th and 18th centuries seems to be little more than the history of probabilism. Theologians have always been known to have held probable, less probable, more probable, safe, or even lax opinions.

I do not think we should be unduly perturbed by such a situation, unless it amounted to a total depravity and permissiveness. It is nothing new. Pluralism and lack of uniformity can be healthy signs and are in fact needed if theological discussion is to be fostered and developed. The magisterial teaching should serve as a guide and balance between extremes. Whenever the Church speaks in her official capacity through the popes, councils, congregations, etc., on any moral issue, that position should be taken as the official teaching and if any theologians express dissent, these must be clearly presented as dissenting opinions. Only when the Church has not made any official pronouncement on a moral issue, should the opinions of reliable theologians be followed. But the seminarians should be exposed to different approaches to the moral problems. They should always be made aware that there can be more than one possible approach to a problem and therefore possibly more than one solution to it. One should be slow to absolutely and categorically rule out approaches and solutions as totally wrong. Who could be absolutely certain that future developments would not prove things otherwise?

Foot Notes

- 1 Cf. R. A. McCormick, "Moral Theology 1940-1989: An Overview", *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), 3-24.
- 2 This subject is treated extensively in Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, (eds) *Readings in Moral Theology*, No 1, 'Moral Norms and Catholic Tradition', New York. Paulist Press, 1979.
- 3 R. A. McCormick, "Moral Theology 1940-1989. An Overview" in *Theological Studies*, 50 (1989), 24.

4. Meaning of the personal

A point that constantly comes up in the responses both oral and written is the meaning of "personal" in affirming the centrality of the personal in moral values today. This is a new element that figures in recent Catholic moral thinking, starting at least with Pope John XXIII, and it constitutes a common point among all peoples, Catholic and non-Catholic, Christian as well as non-Christian. John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra* addresses all human beings appealing to the integrity of the human person: "The teaching of Jesus Christ joins, as it were, earth with heaven, in that it embraces the whole man, namely his soul and body, intellect and will, and bids him lift up his mind from the changing conditions of human existence to that heavenly country where he will one day enjoy unending happiness and peace" (2). The Pontiff in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, addressed to all mankind, reaffirmed the centrality of the person: "Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely that every human being is a person...For, men are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, they are by grace the children and friends of God and heirs of eternal glory" (9-10). Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* pointed out that this tendency towards self-responsibility and self-fulfilment is not something optional but part of humanity's divine call in Christ (16).

This personalism is clearly the hallmark of the moral orientation given by Pope John Paul II. One can, however, note

at least three distinct shades of this personalism. *The Redeemer of Man*, the first encyclical of the Pope, presents a personalism characteristic of the Phenomenology of Max Scheler: "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own...The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly...must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into Him with all his own self"(10). In the *Laborem Exercens* an optimistic Biblical view of man created in the image and likeness of God and sharing with him dominion over the earth forms the core of the human person (6). This is surely a very idealistic view of man, at the same time in communion with the world as flesh, in communion with himself as a psyche and in communion with God as spirit. In the *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* he faces the actual reality of the human person, "always called into question and threatened by sin". Still the story of the human race described by Scripture is a story of constant achievements, repeated, increased and extended in response to the divine vocation given from the beginning to man and woman and inscribed in the image they received (30).

This third meaning of the human person, the historical being beset with sin and suffering in solidarity with other human persons, today occupies the central stage in moral thinking, particularly under the impact of Liberation Theology. The focus of moral decisions is not the isolated individual, but the person in the bosom of the human community, with all its problems, frustrations, aspirations and hopes. This society is not one in ideal paradisiacal conditions, the organic reality the reform of which in the traditional Catholic thinking required only an emphasis of this organicity through co-operation and recognition of necessary hierarchies. Today this corporalist imagination is replaced by a conflictual imagination which makes people see in society first of all its victims, structures of injustice and oppression and a corresponding distortion of the totality. This means that the ideal world of Greek moral thinking framed in the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and courage is replaced by something akin to the Buddhist

dharmic vision of *dukkha-samudaya-nirodha-marga*, bondage-desire-prevention-path. The human person is caught up in a sick world, which can be understood only through the eyes of its victims, the unemployed, the marginal, the powerless, the oppressed. Moral life is not escaping into a world of ideas, but disentangling oneself through action-oriented commitment or *praxis*, addressing the actual evils that keep oneself and one's fellow human beings stuck in the mire. Thus every moral judgment is a renunciation, distancing oneself from the evil that surrounds one and choosing one's authentic self.

Gregory Baum says: "We note that this moral element may be supplied in a variety of ways. Religious people, be they Christian, Jewish, or members of other world faiths, will seek in their own traditions those elements that call for justice and solidarity. Many secular people derive this moral sense from a humanist or socialist tradition which they honour and with which they identify themselves... Marxists in particular assume that socialist society is morally superior to capitalism and often allow this moral judgment to find expression in the indignation of their prose, but they rarely formalize the ethics implicit in their judgment and even more rarely use ethical reflection in their own reasoning. Marxists have paid a high price for their lack of ethical clarification"¹.

This interreligious and intercultural personalism clearly transcends the natural-supernatural and philosophy-theology dichotomies. Only through *nirvana* from present bondage can one attain authenticity, according to Buddhism. In Hinduism the bondage of the ego can be resolved only by transcending it through *tattvam asi iham brahmasmi* the realization that God is the authentic ground and source of one's selfhood. Even in Islam the obedient Muslim acknowledges oneself as a servant of Allah! True morality is [to escape from the slavery works and attaining the true freedom in the Spirit, by which we cry with the Son, Abba!

John B. Chettimattam

Foot Note

1. *Theology and Society*, New York: Paulist Press, 1987, p. 72

The Uncertain Legacy of Scholastic Ethics

I

I shall define scholasticism as a tradition of dialectical reasoning that 1) identifies disputed subjects within a tradition, 2) sorts out principles from these plural sources and positions, 3) reconciles oppositions and 4) re-presents the material systematically. Historically, scholastic ethics is a style of reasoning that began in the West about the time of the Gregorian reforms (1050-1122), when the church produced a systematic *corpus juris* as a chief part of its attempt to establish its corporate and legal identity *vis-à-vis* the kings. Gratian's *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum* (1139), which came to form part of the *Corpus Juris Canonici*, is one of the early examples of the scholastic method as applied to practical subjects, and indicates the enormous power of the method to organize disparate material and to reconcile plural sources and traditions. Peter Lombard's *Libri Sententiarum* (1150) represents the transition shortly thereafter to a *summa* style, of which St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* (1256-1272) is the epitome. The second part of the *Summa* — known as the *Prima-Secundae* and *Secunda-Secundae* — is the most original and brilliant part of the work, and it remains the most comprehensive treatment of practical reason in the scholastic tradition. Arguably, it is the most comprehensive treatment of practical reason written in any tradition.

The scholastic method of treating matters of law, politics, and ethics continued after the high middle ages. It had low points and high points — the latter invariably flowering in connection with ecclesiastical efforts to re-integrate its own law

in times of crisis. Hence, 'after Trent the renewal of internal discipline led to a new wave of scholasticism. Suarez's *De Legibus* (1612), to cite but one prominent work of the post-Tridentine era. After Vatican I the code of canon law was overhauled, culminating in the *Codex Juris Canonici* (1917). At the same time, a renewal of scholastic philosophy and theology was commissioned by Leo XIII (*Aeterni Patris*, 1879). The Leonine revival reached its high water mark in the 20th century. Scholasticism has had its low points. The very success of scholasticism has prompted glossators and manualists to compress the artifacts of the method into a single, uniform set of findings. Scholastic ethicists then become not only removed from original texts, but more importantly removed from the spirit of the method, which in fact thrives on a plurality of sources. Decadent scholasticism is a scholasticism that no longer perceives a need for the scholastic method. This is perhaps the downside of the close historical connection between scholasticism and ecclesiastical law.

The so-called Leonine Revival was quite remarkable. In the first place, it recovered both the letter and spirit of the scholastic tradition. The recovery of original texts went hand in hand with creative welter of new scholasticisms. In retrospect, it is fair to say that the Leonine revival represents the most creative period of scholasticism since the high middle ages. While the various waves of scholasticism have been closely tied to ecclesiastical efforts to get its own house in order, the Leonine revival lifted scholasticism out of the seminaries and into the modern university. New sources and authorities, drawn from secular philosophy and science, were incorporated into the problematics with which neo-scholasticism had to wrestle. Moreover, many of the most prominent neo-scholastics of this century were laymen — Gilson, Maritain, Simon, Pieper, Pegis — who worked in ordinary universities rather than in seminaries, and who were more interested in the integrative possibilities of scholasticism than in what payoffs might be at hand for the guidance of souls in the internal forum of the sacrament of penance, or in the external forum of ecclesiastical law. If the waning of contemporary scholasticism, at least on moral subjects, was marked by the controversy surrounding *Humanae Vitae* (1968), it is also true to say that about the time of WWII,

diffidence about, and finally the rejection of, scholastic ethics was by and large a clerical phenomenon — of which dissent over *Humanae Vitae* was a symptom rather than a cause. There was a tension between the creative scholasticism that took place in universities and in journals, and the scholasticism institutionalized in seminaries and in religious houses.

Before I go on to the substance of this article, I would like to mention two facts about the tradition of scholastic ethics. First, as the preceding paragraphs indicate, scholastic ethics is not monolithic, either in terms of its content or its practitioners¹. It has encompassed a wide array of different philosophies. Second, scholastic method has been problematic from the very beginning. The reaction in our time against scholasticism is itself part of a long tradition of vexation and hostility about submitting morality to such rational methods.

II

The reader will understand that in an essay of this length one is required to generalize. In that spirit, I will sketch two important principles of scholastic ethics. Each concern the traditional scholastic interest in natural law. In doing so, I will limit my remarks to St. Thomas' account of the natural law. St. Thomas is, after all, the exemplar of western scholasticism. And although, historically speaking, natural law theory has been filtered through a number of different philosophies, most scholars will agree that whatever natural law theory is, it is something like what Aquinas did, or tried to do in the second-part of the *Summa Theologiae*.

I shall not discuss the doctrines of natural law, nor the applications of these doctrines to disputed subjects, such as contraception, *in vitro* fertilization, or rights to private property. Such discussions have to be conducted at their proper level of detail and complexity. Rather, I shall briefly sketch what seems to be presupposed in giving an account of natural law.

In the first place, it needs to be said that, for Aquinas, natural law theory is not just a theory of law by which one hopes to generate a few minimal precepts for conduct which any and all agents can subscribe to regardless of how they may have been tutored in their respective moral and cultural

traditions, and despite what might seem to be intractable differences over their respective views of the end or perfection of man. This is a modern conception of natural law, that derives from the 18th century effort to establish a political and legal order of individual rights among persons who do not share common religious, or even moral, perspectives. Modern natural law theories are minimalistic and legalistic, and are not only quite different but are in fact the substitute for an ethic of perfection.

In the second place, it also needs to be said that Aquinas' natural law theory presupposes a certain kind of community. To put this in the negative, we can say that it presupposes a community whose moral inquiry and discourse is committed to something more than a minimal consensus among those who agree on little else. To restate it in more positive terms, Aquinas' natural law theory presupposes a community of inquiry and discourse that has set human perfection as the proper end of speculative inquiry about practical matters. Hence, the effort to discover whether a human action is *secundum naturam*, according to nature, is part and parcel of an effort to discover what is suitable to, and in some cases, required of, man's pursuit of perfection. Furthermore, Aquinas never believed that natural law inquiry is something that can be totally abstracted from the history and experience of prudent men. The natural law theorist is not a Cartesian-like Robinson Crusoe who can strand himself on the island of his own rationality, and then expect to develop a set of norms for human activity. Rather, the theorist is dependent upon the experience accumulated and sifted by a tradition.

Before I go on to discuss these two points, it would be appropriate for me to say that I know very little about the historical course, or about the contemporary state, of moral reflection in non-Occidental cultures. Nevertheless, having read a few issues of this journal, I am impressed by the suspicion among Indic philosophers and theologians of any imposition of Western rationalism and legalism. Moreover, I understand that philosophers and theologians in India face the daunting task of addressing a religiously pluralistic situation that is far more complex than what is to be found in the West. Finally, I am aware that the Catholic seminaries and colleges in India were not untouched by a decadent and legalistic scholasticism.

I take it for granted, then, that the readers of *Jeevadhara* are not unfamiliar with some of the problems I shall discuss.

III

If one examines the organization of the second-part of the *Summa Theologiae*, one is immediately struck by the range of material Aquinas sets out to cover. Let's begin with the *prima-secundae*. The first section² treats the metaphysics of the will. Here, he tries to establish that each and every *actus humanus* is magnetized toward a *finis ultimus* — toward perfected activity. Perfected activity is the one thing that man cannot but will, and it enters into every intentional act. The end, of course, is intellectual and volitional communion with God. Before Aquinas examines any of the details about human acts, about virtues, or about laws, he makes it very clear that the point of this inquiry is not just to analytically isolate the natural law governing this or that human function, nor the natural law that undergirds this or that positive law.

The first five questions are important not only because of content yielded. To be sure, the content is important, if not startling. Aquinas is satisfied that he has shown that no finite good, including man himself, can be the end of man. By implication, the analysis makes good on Augustine's formula of the restless heart through a clever use of Aristotle's understanding of the soul as an *ens in potentia*, that becomes what it is in relation to beings *extra animam*. Yet the first five questions are important because they orient the subsequent discussion by showing what one expects to discover in such inquiries about human nature.

When he goes on, in the next section³ to study the *actus humanus* in detail, he reminds the reader of the telos of the inquiry: "Since happiness is to be gained through acts of some kind, we must now consider human acts in order to know which are the acts by which we shall achieve happiness and which will prevent us from achieving it". In short, he gives his reader every reason not to make the mistake of believing that natural law theory is merely an account of the phenomenological microscopies of this or that human power or function. The study of the human intellect and will is not an inquiry into

what is proper to just either of those powers, but is rather a study of what belongs to the "whole man".

An enduring mistake of those who have stood in this tradition is to simply forget that natural law inquiry for Aquinas is not what I have termed the phenomenological microscopics (compressed into textbooks of rational psychology), but is rather an inquiry into the law governing the perfection of the whole person. The point of engaging such an inquiry is to figure out how we might come, through our acts, to beatitude. For example, in the next major section of the *prima-secundae*⁵, Aquinas treats the virtues⁶. Once again, in the prologue to the section on the virtues⁷, he clarifies the context of the inquiry. It is first necessary, he says, to treat the "principles of human acts". The "intrinsic principles" are the potentials of man as perfected by the virtues, which need to be distinguished from the "extrinsic principles". By the latter, he means law and grace⁸.

The point to be made is twofold. *First*, Aquinas is not interested in mapping out the human powers, faculties and potentials as though the law of nature represents a normative picture of man statically conceived as *he is* (if indeed such an analysis is even possible), but rather as *he comes to be perfected*. Accordingly, the inquiry is not directed to the human powers as potentially perfectable, but rather to the principles by which they are brought into act, and disposed to excellent activity — namely, the virtues. And this is only part of the story, since Aquinas contends that virtues are dispositions to further activity. Not only are they not adequately understood by reducing them back to the mere potentials of which they are the perfections, but the virtues cannot be adequately understood without seeing them as having a teleological and prospective thrust to a further good: the perfected activity of the whole person. *Second*, his distinction between the intrinsic and extrinsic principles of human acts is surprising. Are law and grace extrinsic to human acts? What Aquinas appears to be saying is that before one examines the activity of legislation, and before one takes up grace, it is necessary to get clear on the basic teleological framework of 1) powers perfected by activities and 2) virtues as dispositions to further activity. This is what the art of legislation exemplifies, protects and promo-

tes, and what grace perfects. In any case, this is an important passage; a warning, as it were, from Aquinas himself, to anyone who would reduce natural law theory to the account of laws and precepts in the *De Legibus*⁹. One who tries to understand the relation between law-making and the natural law, without understanding the natural law telos of the virtues, will not have an accurate picture of natural law.

If we turn to the treatise on law, we find Aquinas having presupposed the antecedent work on why natural law is a law of perfected activity. But even here in *De Legibus*, natural law is treated in a number of different contexts, of which the issue of precepts is but one. Natural law is understood to be something *ontological* (pertaining to the nature of man); to be *rational* activity (the mode by which a rational being participates in divine governance); to be *preceptive* (involving fundamental precepts governing any and all *recta ratio*); and to be *legal* (as guidelines for the creation of man-made positive laws). The law of nature cannot be understood by reducing it to a bare set of precepts that the mind can latch on to even while prescinding from any consideration of what precepts mean in the light of these related themes.

Notice, for example, that the first principle of practical reason — the good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided — is open-ended¹⁰. It does not command conformity to just this or that good, but to the good in general. This is precisely the kind of first principle fit to govern a being who is open to a universal good, and whose end cannot be achieved in communion with any particular finite good (or aggregate of such goods). The first principle of practical reason is itself a law of perfection. It is quite unlike a Kantian categorical imperative, for it is not a maxim that can be completely satisfied in piecemeal. The first principle has no content without human engagement in the world and striving for perfection. In commanding a *pursuit* of the good, as well as an active resistance to what is opposed to it, the first principle is the thread of each and every *actus humanus*. Presumably, the command is completely fulfilled only in *beatitude*.

It is also worth noting that when Aquinas outlines the *ordo praeceptorum legis naturae*, these first precepts of the natural

law are far from being a bare minimum. The order of these first precepts includes: 1) the natural inclination to preserve being; 2) the natural inclination to procreate, and to educate; 3) the natural inclination to know the truth about God and the order of justice in society¹¹. These precepts cover virtually everything that might come under human volition. If one looks to natural law theory to posit a set of indisputable precepts which anyone can agree to, one should look elsewhere than to the *Summa* for such a program. Again, this natural law theory is quite unlike modern versions, which seek to reach categorical rules which any rational agent must agree to whatever else he or she might want: alleviating the fear of violent death (Hobbes), protecting property against brigands (Locke), protecting the inherent dignity of "persons" against instrumental rationality (Kant), or enhancing self-respect (Rawls). Granted that all of these are human goods of one sort or another, it is crucial to understand that Aquinas does not delimit the natural law in such a fashion. And here, we are only speaking of Aquinas' list of first precepts, leaving to one side all of the other secondary precepts. The first precepts are inclinations to perfection, rationally grasped and appropriated by the agent. One will look in vain here for lists of "basic goods", or transcendental conditions of the possibility of claiming "rights", and so forth.

Finally, in the last section of the *prima-secundae*¹² Aquinas treats the *lex vetus* and the *lex nova*. Unfortunately, this material is frequently left out of textbooks and other abridged collections of Aquinas' theory of law. Here, Aquinas relativizes the law of nature. By the term "relativize", I mean that the law of nature is discussed in the context of the historical sequence of divine revelation. In the section on the New Law, he states: "So Chrysostom, interpreting the text of Mark, 'the earth produces of itself, first the shoot, then the ear, and then the full grain in the ear', has this to say: 'First it produces the shoot in the law of nature; then the ears, in the law of Moses; finally the full fruit of the Gospel'"¹³. Existentially, in the concrete world of history, our rational participation in the eternal law includes, as Aquinas says, "all those things that God arranges in history for man's salvation and that make our way towards beatitude"¹⁴. The law of nature is superseded,

in the sense of being mediated by the order of faith, hope, and charity.

In this vein, Aquinas sketches an historical scheme of human participation in divine providence (which is, correlatively, a typology of laws): that which prevailed *ante statum peccati*, the condition of man *post peccatum*, and the participation in divine governance *post tempus gratiae*¹⁵. Interestingly, in his treatment of the Old Law, he contends that after the sin of Adam, God left man solely to the law of nature as a kind of admonition¹⁶. Left to his own lights, which were darkened by sin and distorted customs, man made a mess of his effort to understand and appropriate the natural law, and hence God allowed man to remain in that condition as a way to entice men to cooperate with divine assistance in the Old Law, and then in the New Law. The theological approach has to be kept in mind, lest his natural law theory be reduced to an ahistorical analysis of the human essence from which one then tries to unpack a set of apodictic laws. The treatment of the gospel history is not a theological map imposed upon the natural order. In fact, it is only with the consideration of the gospel history that one reaches the historical specificity of the real world of human actions, institutions, and laws.

Now, I would like to summarize and to draw a few conclusions from the foregoing discussion:

First, it is clear that natural law theory is a way of organizing a wide array of different issues under the main problematic of what is required for man to become perfect. It is not a reductionistic technique of sweeping the issues clear of either metaphysical or historically contingent content in order to pinpoint the minimal foundations of law.

Second, if one examines each of the major junctures of the *prima-secundae*, one can take either of two forks in the road. That is, one can take the reductionistic and legalistic path, or one can ascertain how each respective section contributes to the more general goal of inquiry into what is required of human activity en route to perfection. To be more concrete, let's briefly rehearse the major junctures in the text. The section on the ordination of the will¹⁷ could be read as just a problem in causality: viz., what is needed to elicit the first act of the

human will; or it could be read as an inquiry into whether human beings pursue a good that is more than the sum of the parts of the individual actions: viz., whether it is reasonable to view human activity as a quest for perfection. The section on the *actus humanus*¹⁸ could be read only as a study of the phenomenological details of human intentionality; or it can be read as an inquiry into what sort of actions need to be performed by a *homo viator* in search of perfection. The section on the virtues¹⁹ could be read as an effort to match 'perfections with powers; or it can be read as an effort to understand the dynamism of perfected activities, especially as these perfections dispose the agent to further activity²⁰. The section on law²¹ could be approached as a Kantian-like inquiry into the categorical versus the merely contingent foundations of law; or the section can be viewed as another layer of the larger issue concerning the telos human activity (here, as law-making) for perfected activity. Finally, the section on the Old and New Laws²² could be viewed as a kind of theological afterthought to the treatment of natural law; or it can be approached as an analysis of natural law in the concrete and existential settings of history.

Third, the disjunctions outlined above are simplistic, among other reasons because there are other ways of interpreting Aquinas than what is represented in these disjunctive pairs. I have stacked the deck by making the second member of each disjunction more inclusive than the first. Nevertheless, I believe that the disjunctions are not inaccurate if one looks at the history of natural law theory. The point is this. Depending on what one has in mind, and more specifically, depending upon what one expects a natural law theory to accomplish, each of these sections of the *prima-secundae* could serve as the foundation for different, and even incompatible, natural law theories. So, for example, the section on the *actus humanus* could be read in the light of an 18th century inquiry into the "springs" of human action. For in the 18th century, natural law was widely regarded not as a set of normative moral principles, but rather a set of insights into what makes human beings "tick". If one is primarily interested in governing a society that is characterized by individual self-interest rather than by common virtues and moral convictions, then one will find the natural law of psychological "springs" quite attractive. Obviously, this

is quite different than a natural law of moral precepts, not to mention a natural law of perfected activity²³. So, too, the section on the virtues could be reduced to a matching of powers and faculties with their respective perfections. This kind of reductionism was not uncharacteristic of the older textbook and manual approaches to natural law. This is precisely the type of natural law theorizing that led many Catholics to misunderstand the teaching in *Humanae Vitae*. For that teaching was widely construed to be an effort to isolate a human faculty and/or function, and then to authoritatively elaborate upon what is telic or dystelic to that function. It is said that the sins of the fathers will be visited upon their sons, and contemporary theologians are paying the wages of the sins of their scholastic fathers on this issue of contraception. Similarly, the discussion of the precepts of the law of nature in the *De Legibus* can be interpreted as a Kantian like effort to reach absolutely binding laws — show-stoppers, as it were, for any debate about conduct. If the older distortion of Aquinas' natural law theory was its reduction to matching 'powers with perfections, the contemporary distortion is a Kantianizing of the first precepts²⁴.

IV

The question I wish to raise now is rarely asked by philosophers and theologians in the scholastic tradition. All of us who align ourselves in the Augustinian-Thomistic axis owe a debt of gratitude to Alasdair MacIntyre, whose recent work has brought this issue to the center of attention²⁵. What kind of community of discourse is presupposed by Aquinas' treatment of morality? It is a good question, for as I suggested in the opening remarks of this essay, scholasticism is a method that presupposes a plurality of material and authorities. In other words, the method contains a reciprocity between past theories and present interpretations, and the theorist is required to move between the retrospective claims of the tradition and his own prospective interests in carrying that tradition forward. In short, scholasticism is a discourse within a *traditio*. But what kind of *traditio*?

At the outset, we must remind ourselves that there are many traditions of natural law theory, and in fact most natural

law theories since the 17th century have not been scholastic. Moreover, even scholastic-like natural law theories have frequently had more in common with modern, analytical efforts to find a few basic rights or natural principles of justice, than with anything resembling what Aquinas meant by the *lex naturalis*. It is clear that not everyone expects a natural law account to yield insight about the telos of human perfection. As I said earlier, most modern accounts are a substitute for such an inquiry, and thus embody precisely the opposite expectation.

In answer, then, to the questions whose *traditio*, and what kind of *traditio*, I will summarily offer the following profile: *First*, Aquinas' natural law theory presupposes a community of discourse committed to discovering what makes man perfect. *Second*, it presupposes that the natural law theorist is situated in an historical tradition upon which he can rely for information about past inquiries and applications of those inquiries. To ask what kinds of human activities are *secundum naturam* is a question set in the context of the ancient formula *fides quaerens intellectum*. One inherits two things: 1) the more or less successful theories and practices of the past, and 2) the education of the tradition that enables one to interpret it. The *quaerens* is directed to a deeper understanding and appropriation of the tradition. However, the enterprise is not merely a conservative clarification of the tradition. While it is true that the enterprise requires a faith that there is an *intellectum* on the prospective side of the *quaerens*, what is to be found is somewhat open-ended. No one would have expected Aquinas to have been able to so successfully reconcile Augustine with Aristotle. Once one accepts perfection as the end of human activity, it must also be the end of theorizing about that activity. And from this it follows that such an inquiry cannot be conducted by accepting an *ahistorical* Cartesian, or for that matter, Lockean, standpoint. This latter standpoint makes sense only if one takes for granted the notion that natural law is something that can be located while prescinding from past theories and experiences, as well as prescinding from the ongoing pursuit of the telos of perfected activity *embodied in the inquiry itself*. In other words, natural law theorizing exemplifies the very sort of natural law one has in mind. So

long as natural law theory is an inquiry into human perfection, the inquiry is not over until that end is reached.

Third, Aquinas' natural law theory presupposes a theological tradition. This tradition is needed, in the first place, to clarify why the order of nature is teleologically surcharged with a divine providence (in contrast to being a static repository of natural principles of justice). It is needed, in the second place to teach the inquirer how we can conceive of, much less act for, communion with God as the determinate and proper end of human activity.

In the space remaining, I would like to unpack these remarks. In such a brief essay one cannot elaborate them completely, but here I can at least indicate how one might begin to do so. The best place to begin is with a point that can make natural law theorists very uncomfortable. Namely, Aquinas' natural law theory requires a range of knowledge about reality that far exceeds any modern philosophical standard of warranted assertability. There is no chance that any individual, working only with his own experience and the tools of his own rationality, could hope to be privy to the information needed for the function of the natural virtues, much less for the overall rationality of the inquiry undertaken in the *Summa Theologiae*. Modern natural law theorists require very little in the cognitive order. Hobbes, for example, only requires the agent to grasp the evil of violent death and the most rudimentary reflections on the springs of human action. Aquinas, on the other hand, requires the natural law theorist to understand that God exists, that this deity is a creator, and that this deity has the requisite attributes to be a *finis ultimus* worthy of man. This, in turn, presupposes a developed tradition of natural theology, as well as a high-grade tradition of theology proper. The entirety of the *prima-secundae*, beginning with the first five questions, involves not only a philosophical reflection establishing that God exists, but a theological tradition that makes the conception of that God as creator and end sufficiently explicit to be an object of self-conscious pursuit. Without a commitment to that end, in a way that is thematically explicit, the whole point of Aquinas' system withers. One can cull out the bits and pieces of what is left and re-absorb them into other systems

perhaps assigning the treatise on the virtues to an Aristotelian system and the treatise on law to a Kantian-like system.

As we know, and as Aquinas himself insists in the first question, article one of the *Summa*, the natural knowledge of God is exceedingly remote and difficult to acquire²⁶. This is even more true of the *credenda*, the subject of which are given by divine revelation and mediated through a theological community. Now, there are two ways to go with this. On the one hand, we can say that Aquinas' natural law theory is just another way of talking from within the standpoint of Christian revelation. It is fideistic and cannot be a strictly philosophical point of departure for matters of law and morality. On the other hand, we can say that it is a peculiarly modern expectation that an account of natural law be available to an inquirer separated from any one tradition. Again, it is the modern position that individuals cannot be mistaken about, or inadequately knowledgeable about, the law of nature²⁷. For it is the immediate grasp of the conditions of free agency and self-interest that the modern theorists presuppose for the foundation of consensual polity. To even suggest that the individual is dependent upon a tradition of inquiries and judgments about such matters is to threaten the epistemological foundations of political order²⁸. In any case, Aquinas took it for granted that the inquirer inherits a *traditio* and need not re-invent the starting points of inquiry.

Dependence on a tradition is not only evident in those issues which require information about God, but is also in the more routine areas of moral judgment. One example will suffice. In his treatment of polygamy, Aquinas immediately concedes that 'of the three ends of marriage, polygamy does not violate the *bonum proles*²⁹. Regarding the *proles*, it would seem that in polygamy, the more the merrier [*cum unus vir sufficial pluribus uxoribus fecundandis*], and in this respect it does not violate the natural law. However, in terms of the *bonum fidelis*, the arrangement usually proves quite unsuitable to the fidelity each spouse owes to the other. Aquinas is cautious, he says *tamen multum impedit*. It does not absolutely remove the good of fidelity, but it does pose a great impediment. Finally, with regard to the *sacramentum*, Aquinas contends

that polygamy destroys the sacramental symbol of Christ and the church. Plural wives breaks the symbol.

My point here is not to assess the details of Aquinas' position on polygamy. I offer it only as an example of how natural law theory is not, for him, simply a method that reduces issues down to what can be asserted apodictically. In the first place, his judgment about the way polygamy tends to impede the *bonum fidei* could not be reached in any *a priori* way. As medieval penitentials indicate, the culture was familiar with these problems. Incest, polygamy, abduction of spouses and children, were common occurrences in the middle ages. The judgment, then, that polygamy is usually unsuitable to one of the constituent goods of marriage is a judgment that rests upon the experience of a community. This does not mean that polygamy is wrong only because of custom and convention; rather, it is precisely because of custom and tradition that one has sufficient information to see that the practice indeed violates the natural law. In the second place, it goes without saying that Aquinas' understanding of the *sacramentum* is drawn from a theological tradition. Therefore, his treatment of the issue involves convergent lines of inquiry which bespeak reliance on a tradition of inquiries, experiences and judgments about human activity.

Josef Pieper observed that "St. Thomas did not present moral action from a single point of view"³⁰. This remark could be a fitting summary and conclusion to everything I have said in this essay. However, Pieper also contended that one of the most serious distortions of modern thomisms has been the focus on individual, subjective conscience rather than the virtue of prudence. He pointed out that in the *Summa* Aquinas deals specifically with "situation conscience" in only one article³¹, while in the *secunda-secundae* alone he devoted ten questions consisting of fifty-six articles, to the subject of prudence³². One should read Pieper's discussion of the significance of this reversal of emphasis. For my purpose here, I wish to point out that this preoccupation with conscience reflects the extent to which Aquinas' moral vision had become privatized in a distinctively modern way. The presentation of moral action through the lens of individual conscience tends to locate the

center of moral judgment in the private domain of an individual deliberating about various and sundry moral dilemmas; prudence, on the other hand, is of necessity a more public and tradition-bound activity. Pieper quoted a medieval adage that "no man is self-sufficient in the matter of prudence"³³. What is meant by this adage is not that one who has the virtue fails to have it, but rather that the subject matter of prudence includes any and all aspects of reality insofar as they bear upon an action. And no individual man is self-sufficient in knowing all of these things. Prudence requires not only an openness to reality, but also a certain *docilitas* — a willingness to learn from others. Good intentions and the untroubled report of individual conscience are not enough for successfully pursuing the moral life. If one is to engage in the kind of natural law theory undertaken by Aquinas, it is crucial to be situated in a community of experience and judgment.

Now I can conclude with a few brief remarks about the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Without arguing here the merit or demerit of the church's position on contraception, one could say that the reaction to this teaching is at least *prima facie* evidence that natural law theory has become untethered from its moorings in a *traditio*. Many of its critics assumed that the natural law must be restricted to those minimal precepts concerning which there is a political or scholarly consensus. This is indeed the expectation that modern theorists have of natural law discourse, but as I have tried to suggest in this essay, this expectation is quite different than the ethic of perfection that underlies Aquinas' theory. Rather than viewing the natural law as given to prudence, set in the context of a communal wisdom (both speculative and practical) of a *traditio*, many theologians assumed that the touchstone is individual conscience.

Perhaps most revealing is the widespread opinion that there is something fundamentally contradictory about the church teaching authoritatively about the law of nature. This is only a contradiction if one supposes that the law of nature is principally revealed to individual consciousness, and that one can clearly separate epistemic foundations of the individual from all of the other relations and modes of knowing, including the educative process by which the inquirer is rendered able

to participate in such inquiries in the first place. But that is only to say that if one is a Cartesian, a Lockean, or a Rawlsian, one will not make much sense of *Humanae Vitae*. The encyclical supposes, as I indicated in connection with Aquinas' treatment of polygamy, convergent lines of inquiry: including philosophy, sacramental theology, and a tradition of experience about such matters. The point of the teaching, as I understand it, was to speak about the perfection of human activity in the spousal relationship. It was not an effort to set down the minimal requirements of how to engage in sexual intercourse without sin. The fact that the encyclical was received this way bespeaks a serious deterioration in our notion of law.

It is understandable, however, why the teaching (or at least its natural law component) has caused such vexation. If the teaching is taken to mean a static matching of faculties and functions with their respective perfections, then there is a legitimate ground for being disappointed. For this would seem to reduce the natural law to minimal precepts abstracted from the spiritual, psychological and communal interests of human activity. Indeed, this would amount to a kind of legalism which, as I have suggested, is the predictable shadow cast over any theory of natural law that fails to discuss the larger telos of man's natural quest for perfection. That clerics in the western world closed ranks against *Humanae Vitae* is understandable, since the clerics bore the brunt of a decadent scholasticism. Regrettably, that scholasticism was a caricature of the tradition of Aquinas.

What remains to be done is to take a fresh look at this tradition. We should not be interested in making natural law discourse easier. The fangs need not be taken out of both decadent scholasticism and the newer Kantian versions of natural law, and then reinserted in the mouth of the older tradition. This will require not only a recovery of the theme of perfection in our study of human nature, but more importantly a reconsideration of the context of tradition in the intellectual life. What this means in the context of Indic philosophy and theology is not for me to say, but for the readers to figure out.

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Foot Notes

- 1 On the pluralism of scholasticism, and in particular on the varieties of neo-Thomism in our century, see Gerald A. McCool, S. J., "The Tradition of Saint Thomas in North America: At 50 Years" *The Modern Schoolman*, LCV, March 1988, p. 204.
- 2 I - II, qq. 1-5. 3 I - II, qq. 6-21. 4 I - II, q. 10; a. 1
- 5 I - II, qq. 49-67
- 6 In fact, this is only the first place he treats the virtues, for they will be taken up in much greater detail in the *secunda-secundae*.
- 7 I - II, q. 49. 8 I - II q. 90
- 9 I - II, qq. 90-97. 10 I - II, q. 94, a. 2
- 11 I - II, q. 94, a. 2. 12 I - II, qq. 98-114
- 13 I - II, q. 107, a.3. 14 II-II, 1, a. 7
- 15 II - II, q. 2, a. 7. 16 I - II, q. 98, a. 6; q. 98, a.2
- 17 qq. 1-5. 18 qq. 6-21 19 qq. 49-67.
- 20 I will insert, parenthetically, that the virtues should not be regarded as piecemeal perfections of various Parts of man because, at least in the case of the moral virtues, virtues render the possessor good, not just his sundry parts (S.t. I - II, q. 65, a. 2 ad 3)
- 21 qq. 90-97. 22 qq. 98-114
- 23 On the difference between a psychological and a normative approach to natural law in the 18th century, cf. Morton White's *Philosophy, The Federalist, and the Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987); and Alasdair MacIntyre's new book, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: Univ. Notre Dame Press, 1988 .
- 24 In this regard, the reader might consult my book *A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory* (Notre Dame: Univ. Notre Dame Press, 1987).
- 25 Throughout this part of the essay I am indebted to MacIntyre's *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*. Supra n. 4.
- 26 I, q. 1, a.1:
- 27 MacIntyre makes an important observation in this regard. He points out that many Thomists have tried to defend the superiority of Aquinas' system by supposing that his account can "encounter its modern rivals on *their* chosen ground" (*W. J.* p. 175).
- 28 Here, it is perhaps worth pointing out that many modern theorists hold a more rigorous differentiation of *physis* and *nomos* than what is to be found in Aquinas.
- 29 Supplement, q. 65, a. 1.
- 30 Josef Pieper, *Reality and the Good*, trans. Stella Lange (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1967), p. 111, note 2.
- 31 I, q. 79, a. 13 32 Ibid., p. 81
- 33 Josef Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame: Univ. Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 16.

Action Oriented Morality in Hinduism

In discussing the Hindu tradition of morality, one is automatically confronted with an interesting problematic. Hinduism is a rich tapestry of many traditions: some theistic, others not; some life-affirming, others ascetic. In this paper, I will attempt to survey some of the ethical vectors of Indian tradition as can best be reconstructed from textual and historical evidence, and then show how these themes have come to be understood in the modern era.

Most discussion of Hindu thought begins with the *Rg Veda*, and appropriately so: an often-used litmus test to ascertain whether a school of thought is authentically Hindu is whether it refers to the Vedas, even if in negative terms, as in the case of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. However, several cornerstone ideas of Hinduism do not have their origins in the Vedas, at least in any systematic fashion. These largely absent elements include notions of karma, rebirth, yoga and nonviolence, which in the later tradition became pivotal in the development of Hindu ethics, particularly as known to the West through the work of Ramakrishna, Mahatma Gandhi and others. These apparently have their origins in the so-called Śramanic traditions of India, which, according to some scholars, predate the Brahmanical traditions and perhaps are attributable to the civilizations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa¹. In order to understand social ethics in the later traditions, it is important to have a sense of these underpinnings of the broader Indian world view.

Karma and Rebirth

These twin notions are perhaps the most widely known and least understood hallmarks of Indian (and with the expan-

sion of Buddhism, Pan-Asian) traditions. Teachings on *karma* establish ethical norms; stories of rebirth offer cosmological explanations. As we will see, the former teaches responsibility for one's actions, the latter attributes a perdurance or continuity to action that goes beyond the boundaries of finite biography. The word *karma*, as I have explained elsewhere², means action. Derivative and additional terms have come to be seen as identical with the concept *karma*, such as *samskara*, which refers to the imprint or residue left by a particular action, and *vasana*, which seems to refer to indwelling habit patterns. Whether one considers these individually or collectively, one common strand is evident: our actions have repercussions beyond our individual experiences. Action in the present moment plants a seed (*bīja*.) This seed can lay dormant for an undetermined period of time; its arising at a later time may prompt occurrences that stem from a forgotten time, but nonetheless provide retribution or reward for an earlier action. In virtually all Indian traditions, *karma* takes two forms: afflicted (*kliṣṭa*) and unafflicted (*akliṣṭa*). The former causes repeated suffering; the latter allows one to be liberated from repeating the sufferings and frustrations (*duḥkha*) of the past. In either case, responsibility for one's actions lies within oneself; as proclaimed in the *Yogavāsistha*, it is indeed possible to overcome the negative influences of the past through concerted action in the present: "There are some men who, due to their (afflicted desire, have incapacitated themselves to such an extent that they cannot squeeze their fingers together sufficiently enough to hold water, without scattering several drops. On the other hand, there are some who, by efficacious actions, take on the responsibility of seas, mountains, cities and islands, as well as families, for whom even the earth itself would not be too much... Without a doubt, the fault of the past is appeased by the attributes of the present. The aim of this is the destruction of yesterday's faults by today's attributes." (11:4:20, 11:5:12) When viewed existentially, the "karma" teaching is clearly a call for responsible action within the present moment, aimed at casting off affliction and suffering. The means to achieve this, as discussed below, are ethical in nature and thus also minimize the sufferings of others.

In addition to providing a rationale for the

performance of moral action, the doctrine of karma also supplied a view of the life process rooted in continuity. Rather seeing death as a finality, early Indian thinkers viewed death as in intermediary stage, with a life (*jīva*) returning through the force of past impressions into a new life form to create yet more activities. This early vision of conservation of energy made it virtually inconceivable that our lives are discrete and relatively insignificant. In both the Jain and Buddhist traditions, all life forms are tremendously ancient, existing since "beginningless time". For the Jains, this means that all life has at one time or another been born within the family of every other life form. The Lankavatara Sūtra, a Mahayana Buddhist text, similarly states that "in the long course of *samsara*, there is not one among living beings with form who has not been mother, father, brother, sister, son, or daughter or some other relative. Being connected with the process of taking birth, one is kin to all wild and domestic animals, birds and beings born from the womb". The late Brahmanical Hindu tradition, as we will see below, uses a more "personalistic" approach to the rebirth story. In all three instances, however, a vision of life is offered that goes beyond one's fixed, apparent biography, placing one's experience as an individual within a much broader continuum.

Yoga

The taking of repeated births is referred to as *samsara*, an aimless, afflicted wandering through one of five or six different realms³. The uniqueness of human life is that it provides sufficient incentive in the form of suffering to desire to transcend repeated existence, as well as sufficient time in order to cultivate unafflicted, meditative action that can counteract the deleterious effects of prior action. Throughout Indian traditions, the forms of Yoga were developed for the purpose of putting an end to repeated involvement in the *samsara* or *punarjanma* process. Yoga postures are seemingly depicted in the seals uncovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, and it appears to have been common to the Śramanic groups that gave rise to the Jain and Buddhist traditions. The Rg Veda, in fact, refers to bearded figures that place themselves outside of societal norms⁴.

Later Hindu texts such as the *Śvetāśvatāra Upaniṣad*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the much later *Yoga Sūtra* of Patañjali clearly demonstrate that certain aspects of the Sramanic tradition had become part of the Hindu tradition.

Whether in its Jain, Buddhist, or Hinduized forms, the goal of Yoga is to bring about a cessation (*nirodha*) of those thought propensities that lead to continued afflicted behaviour. The theological and cosmological bases for the practice of Yoga are diverse. For the Jains, there are said to be millions upon millions of individual, eternal life forms (*jivas*) that must disentangle themselves from the sticky effects of karma (said to have a physical reality) in order to attain a state of eternal, splendid aloneness (*kevala*), wherein one sees and knows all things yet remains unsullied. For the Buddhists, there is no discussion of individual selves. Reference is made only to the suffering (*duhkha*), impermanence (*anitya*) and lack of abiding nature (*anatma*) of things. For the Upaniṣadic Vedantin, for the one of purified consciousness, all reality is seen as not different from Brahman. For the Sāṃkhyan Yogi, life is seen to be composed of unconscious, repeated activity (*prakṛti*) and a mode of disaffected witnessing (*puruṣa*), with the goal being to establish oneself in the latter form, allowing the realm of activity to dissipate itself. Within this variegated theo-cosmological salad, we find a host of seemingly unreconcilable presuppositions: a plurality of identities, no identity, divine identification, and sublime detachment that mirrors divinized status⁵. Yet despite this ideological disharmony (well-recognized and widely debated amongst the respective schools), on the level of praxis there is an apparent agreement. All the schools of Indian thought emphasize moral action as an integral part of the path to liberation.

Nonviolence

Nonviolence or *ahiṃsā* is at the core of Indian morality from the aspect of the renouncer traditions. Within Jainism, renunciation was honed to a fine science out of a concern to avoid all forms of violence. Any form of agitated activity was said to impair one's innate consciousness, bliss and energy. In order to free one of this harmful, obscuring stuff, all acts of violence were to be eschewed. Furthermore, all things, in-

cluding what in non-Jain eyes are deemed inanimate, were in fact said to possess life force (*jiva*); by impairing the consciousness, energy and bliss of rocks and grass as well as air, water, and fire bodies through acts of violence, karma adheres to one's own *jiva*, preventing the ascent to pure aloneness. Consequently, the Jains took great care to provide a moral map of the universe, outlining a hierarchy of life forms and then prescribing practice to minimize violence to them⁶.

In order to clarify how life is to be protected, the Jains outlined four types of violence: intentional, non-intentional, related to profession, and performed out of self-defense. It is hoped that no violence whatsoever need to be committed, and to assist in this endeavour, five specific practices are listed: restraint of mind, control of tongue, carefulness on roads, removing things from roads, and eating in daylight. The first requires that one examine all thoughts to make certain that harm is not intended. The second demands attention to speech. The third and fourth have given rise to communities of Jain practitioners who always walk with a broom to remove insects from their path, and to a ban on long-distance travel. The last rule was applicable in pre-technological society, when poor illumination in Indian households made it impossible to detect forms of life which may have fallen into one's food.

Food consumed by a Jain must be vegetarian; all Jains, whether monastic or leading a secular life, are expected to subsist on only one-sense beings, hence limiting their diet to vegetables and milk products. Additionally, certain professions are deemed acceptable for the lay community. These include government and farming, which are the least acceptable due to their potential for causing harm; writing, arts and crafts, which are considered slightly less violent; and finally commerce, which is considered the least violent profession of all, provided that the goods traded are not obtained by violent means.

For those who choose the life of a monk or a nun, progressively more stringent limitations designed to minimize violence are imposed. For instance, at an advanced stage of monkhood, one is not allowed to dig in the earth, to avoid hurting the earth; nor to swim or bathe, in order to protect the water; not to extinguish fires or light a match, to preserve

fire; not to fan oneself, to prevent harm to the air; not to walk on or touch greenery thus cultivating nonviolence to plants. Hence, all areas of life are considered; no act for the serious Jain can be performed without respect given to the vow of *ahimsa*.

The Buddhists also advocated respect for life. Their opposition against the Hindu practice of animal sacrifice is illustrated as follows in an allegory found in Jataga Tale 18: "Once upon a time, a goat was led to a temple and was about to be sacrificed by the presiding Brahmin. Suddenly, that goat let out a laugh and then uttered a moaning cry. The Brahmin startled by this odd behaviour, asked the goat what was happening. The goat responded as follows: 'Sir, I have just remembered the history of what has led up to this event. The reason I have laughed is that I realized this is the last of 500 births I have suffered as a goat; in my next life I will return again as a human. The reason I have cried is out of compassion for you. You see, 500 births ago I was a Brahmin, leading a goat to the sacrifice. After killing the goat, I was condemned to 500 births as a goat. If you kill me, you will suffer the same fate. The Brahmin, visibly shaken; immediately freed the goat, who trotted away. A few minutes later, lightning struck the goat and he was free to become again human. The Brahmin likewise was spared, due to the goat's compassionate intervention.'⁷

Throughout Buddhist history, events have occurred which affirm reverence for life. The emperor Aśoka, who in the third century B.C. united much of India, converted to Buddhism and established several laws which required kind treatment to animals, in reflection of the Buddhist observance of noninjury to living beings. These included the restriction of meat consumption, the curtailing of hunting, and the establishment of hospitals and roadside watering stations for animals⁸.

Hence, from ancient times in India, there has been an indigenous concern for respecting life. The purpose of this is to minimize one's involvement in the world, with the ultimate intention of using techniques of Yoga to extricate oneself from the cycle of accumulating karma and repeated births.

The Vedic and Brahmanical world views

The entry of Indo-European peoples into the Indian sub-continent brought with it new cultural sensibilities, new gods, and a new social structure. As opposed to the more sedentary peoples of the Indus Valley cities (which apparently were in decline even at the start of the Aryan incursion), the newcomers were wanderers, eventually spreading their lore and language throughout India.

For the first thousand years they were primarily based in the northwest quadrant of India; archaeological evidence points to an eastward (and ultimately southward) movement taking place in approximately 500 BC⁹. The goals and activities of these Vedic peoples stand in marked distinction from the glimpses we have seen of the renouncers. The Vedas celebrate full enjoyment of life, including the use of inebriating substances such as soma and the consumption of beef. The many gods spoken of in the Vedas have direct parallels with European counterparts and similarly are invoked for purposes of love, conquest, knowledge, medicine, magic and more. Additionally, similar to the social structure found in ancient Europe and Persia, a self-conscious sociology was introduced and then adapted to the Indian context. These two aspects of Hinduism will be discussed briefly as providing an alternate model for moral action in India.

The Vedic world view

Max Mueller, the noted German Indologist, has referred to the Vedic system as henotheism or kathenotheism¹⁰, in which a deity appropriate to one's immediate needs is revered until such time as the object desired is attained. For instance, if one is in need of success in war, the deity Indra would become the deity to whom sacrifices are presented in order to invoke the power he symbolizes. In modern times this practice is continued, for instance, in the invocation of the goddess Lakshmi to enhance one's wealth and of the goddess Sarasvati to increase one's knowledge. Combining the multiple deity structure with an existential interpretation of W. Norman Brown's cosmogonic analysis of the Rg Veda¹¹, Antonio T. deNicolas has reconstructed a Vedic philosophical methodology. Out of an undifferentiated chaos (*asal*), symbo-

lized by the dragon Vṛtra, structure (*sat*) arises. Sacrifice (*yaajna*) within this context then allows for a full vision (*dhīh*) and flow (*ṛta*) that proceeds from the power involved in the sacrifice. This then gives way to chaos, and desire once more yields a new sacrificial context. In the phenomenological and scientific terminology employed by de Nicolas, intentionality brings forth worlds that are seen not as competing but as complementary¹². Although this process as presented in the Rg Veda seemed widely accessible to members of society, the establishment of the Vedic peoples throughout India resulted in specialization: one group of the Aryan folk came to control this sacrificial technology and reserved for themselves exclusive access to its power, contributing to the full development of a fully stratified caste system.

Caste and Hindu dharma

The earliest record we have of the caste system in India comes from Rg Veda x:90, wherein the cosmic person, as symbol for the totality of society¹³, is divided into four transactional arenas, corresponding to tasks required for the operation of the world. At the top, associated with the head and speech, is the domain of the Brahmin, the teacher and priest. This caste commands the greatest respect and, as specialists in Vedic ritual, Brahmins are essential for the performance of world-maintaining sacrifice. The next group, the Kṣatriyas, are identified with the arms and serve as warriors and politicians. The Vaiśyas or merchants are associated with the thighs; the workers or Sudras with the feet. The use of the human body, which itself is an organismic totality, underscores the reciprocity of this social relationship. Without the feet, the head would become disembodied, deprived of food, and incapacitated. Without the protective arms of the warrior, the merchant would be unable to ply his trade. Rather than communicating a closed system wherein one group remains pure of the other, this image betokens a conscious recognition of interdependence amongst groups. The whole is impossible without its parts. Standing alone, the person seen as cosmos could be interpreted as providing a basis for the development of respectful, transactional society wherein each person knowingly and happily contributes through the performance of his or her

particular role. This ideal is lauded in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the recent sociological analyses of Dumont, Mckim, Marriott, Inden and others likewise highlight the benefits of this structure.

However, the caste system met an interesting marriage partner in the form of the indigenous rebirth doctrine. The Sramanas, as we have seen, had come to view all life as continuous, with humans being the highest birth attainable. Within the Brahminical system, by contrast, humankind itself became hierarchized with some persons being regarded as less than human and others as useful merely in a menial sense. Only the highest three castes were deemed worthy of education and twice-born status, due to their superior action in past lives. This system proved very effective for social regulation. With the threat of a lower human or animal birth if one strays from one's dharma, there is little incentive to go awry¹⁴. As Norvin Hein has noted, this thorough and convincing cosmology contributed greatly to keeping Hindus in village India satisfied with their lot¹⁵. As true incentive for moral action, the caste system perhaps leaves much to be desired. In the analysis of Dumont, it might be argued that moral action is only possible for those who have renounced the social order. Persons within the caste structure do not possess the ego identity associated with the West European or American model of the individual, and derive their meaning only in terms of their group relationships, i.e., their role in the family and the role their caste plays in the village¹⁶. Certainly, from both the modern natural law and indigenous non-violence perspectives, the fatalism and docility and servitude bred by the caste system seem repugnant. Gandhi sought to rectify the abuses of this system, with some success and historians of religion have recently criticized similar abuses in East Asia¹⁷. However, it is important to keep in mind that the renunciation morality has continued to coexist and in some ways has altered the caste system from within, primarily as it has influenced epic literature and sensibility.

Amalgamation of traditions:

Liberation as universal paradigm

Within the Indian context we have two independent moral universes, which hold distinct ultimates. For the re-

nouncer tradition, non-involvement with the ways of the world is the ideal. Transcendence is achieved by ceasing activities and even thought itself (*citta-vrtti-nirodha*). The person at the highest state stands alone, with an individuality and identity separate from socially sanctioned structures. Conversely, the Brahminical model views the world in terms of interrelating, complementary components, not different from oneself. The pursuit and fulfillment of desire is seen as a celebration of life that is to be appreciated and encouraged.

Yet aspects of each system can be detected in the other. Both contain and express reciprocal relationships. The renouncer is dependent upon the education provided by his or her society in order to learn of the significance of renunciation. Without context, nothing can be given up, because nothing has been held. Likewise, the structure of the caste system has developed within a context that consistently has offered an alternative: dropping out. Ironically, renunciation is probably the most ancient of Indian traditions. The twice born consciously takes on a new identity at the time of initiation which then at a later stage is consciously renounced.

This dynamic tension between conformity and release has long been a theme in Indian literature and philosophy. As various historians have noted, *moksha* or liberation became an officially sanctioned goal promoted by the Brahmin caste, who themselves were encouraged to renounce the village life at the end of their careers, searching out higher meaning in an Ashram context. But what began in India from time immemorial and then was appropriated (along with non-violence and vegetarianism) by the Brahmin caste eventually percolated throughout the society. The great epic figures of Rama, Yudhis-thira, and Arjuna, all of them warriors, flirt with renunciation, return to their dharma, and then indeed renounce. The renouncer ideal of detachment becomes universalized in traditions of war and love¹⁸ and spreads with Buddhism throughout Asia.

As Madeleine Biardeau has written, 'the puranas... opened the mind to the idea of accessibility of *moksha* to all'. Citing various passages from the later sections of the *Mahabharata*, she observes that this new, liberalized conception of liberation

“gave every svadharma [one’s own societal duty] religious content and an access to ultimate salvation. The Brahmanic model was not lost sight of, but was generalized so as to fit all other categories of Hindu society, including sudras, women, and all impure castes. Once the kṣatriya gained access to salvation through his specific and impure activities, the generalization became easy. Every sort of impurity could be sacralized and turned into svadharma. Nothing was outside the realm of ultimate values, though at the same time the status of the Brahmins remains unimpaired”¹⁹. This infusion resulted in a heightened sense of moral responsibility. One is obligated to perform one’s *dharma* not merely because of the admonitions of the village Brahmin, but because such actions indeed hold the world itself together. The *puruṣa* that in Samkhya is the pinnacle of detached, liberated consciousness is also the silent omnipresent figure that encompasses and is identical with all the things of the universe: the renouncer image of aloofness is amalgamated with the Brahmanical universal form. To see the stoppage of the world generating process is in fact to see the world as it truly is.

For many this was a call to action, and continues to be so. In the *Yogāvasiṣṭha*, a late Gupta text combining aspects of renouncer, idealistic Buddhism with socially active Hindu forms, it is said that by overcoming impurities that cloud the mind one gains the strength to be creative in the world. Several hundred years later, the symmetry of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is similarly poignant. Ramakrishna stands as the renouncer par excellence of colonial and post colonial India: he left behind his family, he served at a temple of questionable lineage, specialized in reverie, and travelled very little. Yet he inspired a movement that transformed India and was felt worldwide through the very concrete work exerted by Vivekananda toward the uplift of Hinduism through the establishment of schools, missions and hospitals.

Another instance of action oriented morality is found in the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi used the renouncer techniques of fasting, scrupulous nonviolence, and chastity to achieve a very this-worldly goal: the liberation of India from the colonial domination of Britain. His efforts may be interpreted as sacrifice (*yajña*) in the Vedic sense wherein his own

well publicized protests served to focus the attention of the world on India's predicament. Though many have criticized his technique as an abuse of solemn religious practices, in a certain sense Gandhi continues a long tradition of action-oriented morality wherein the leader or *dharmaraja* comes to symbolize and enact the highest values. By using non-violence as his primary focus, Gandhi identified with the most ancient of religious practices in India, a practice that cuts across ideological borders. His articulation of *ahimsa* as a blueprint for society updates the practice in terms of economic theory: "I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore sinful...True economics...stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life. Strictly speaking, no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little. Even the very process of living is impossible without a certain amount of violence. What we have to do is to minimize it to the greatest extent possible. Indeed the very word non-violence, a negative word, means that it is an effort to abandon the violence that is inevitable in life. Therefore, whoever believes in Ahimsa will engage himself in occupations that involve the least possible violence"²⁰.

Gandhi's economic ideal focused on the model of independently operating villages: "My idea of village *swaraj* is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet inter-dependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus, every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its clothes... My economic creed is a complete taboo in respect to all foreign commodities whose importation is likely to prove harmful to our indigenous interests. This means that we may not in any circumstances import a commodity that can be adequately supplied from our country."²¹ Village intimacy is seen as a place where the accountability for one's actions is automatically regulated by one's direct involvement with all aspects of the economic process. In this model, which in a certain sense also reflects Confucian ideals, identity is gained through relationships with others, thus minimizing occasions for antagonism. Reflective of the Vedic

world as well, one's own prosperity is beneficial for the group as well; success is part of the rhythm and flow (*ṛta*) of life.

Both the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission and the social agenda of Gandhi share concern for action-oriented morality. Both follow a traditional model well established in Hindu tradition that combines concern for absolute truth (*paramārtha*) with action in the world of relativity (*samvṛtti*). By anchoring the intention of one's activity in the changeless, one gains a sense of detachment that further empowers one in the realm of change. In the third chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna urges Arjuna to continue to engage in action, but to do so free from attachment: "Know that action originates from Brahman, and Brahman springs from the imperishable. Therefore, the all-pervading Brahman is eternally established in sacrifice. Here on earth he who does not follow the wheel thus set in motion is evil in nature; by indulging in the senses, he lives in vain, O Partha. He who delights in the Self alone, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self, for him no work remains to be done. He who has nothing to gain by actions done in this world, nor anything to lose by actions not done, he is not dependent upon mortal creatures for any object. Therefore, always perform without attachment the work that should be done. By doing work without attachment, man attains the Supreme."²² Krishna specifically calls for the perfection of oneself accompanied by benevolent action performed for others, invoking the famous king Janaka, who in earlier times is said to have presided over a perfect kingdom as *dharmaraja*: "Through the path of action alone, men like Janaka and others reached perfection. You should perform action also with the intention of guiding people in the right direction. Whatever a great man does, others will copy. The people will follow whatever standard he sets²³."

Moral action is attained when it is done in a spirit free from egotism and attachment: "As the unwise act with attachment to their work, O Bharata, so should a wise man act without attachment for the good of the world. Let no wise man create confusion in the minds of the ignorant who are attached to (selfish) action. He should, rather, inspire others to act by his disciplined performance of actions. All kinds of actions are done by the modes of nature but he whose mind is confused by egotism

thinks, 'I am the doer'. He who knows the true distinction between the soul and the modes of nature and their works, O might-armed, realizes that it is the modes which operate upon the modes, and he does not get attached." Hence, the Bhagavad Gita's model of karma yoga makes any action a viable conduit for the enactment of higher knowledge.

In conclusion, we have seen that two primary ethical values have contributed to the Hindu moral universe. On the one hand, renunciation of involvement with the world, stemming from the ancient *sramanas* and enacted today in the lives of Hindu *sadhus*, Jain *munis*, and Buddhist monks throughout Asia, serves as a positive reminder of the impermanence of things in the world. On the other hand, activity in the world, performed in the spirit of sacrifice, is held also to be sacred, from the time of the Vedas and Dharmasastras up to the work of Vivekananda and Gandhi. The two seemingly competing models have come to complete one another in such a way that action itself can be seen as a path of liberation.

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Foot Notes

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- 4 Rg Veda X:136.
- 5 Yoga Sutra I.23-29 and II.4 for a description of *isvara pranidhana* where one aspires to assume the consciousness of the unfettered deity.
- 6 *Outlines of Jainism*, Jagmenderlal Jaini (Cambridge University Press, 1916), pp. 7-66.
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Fiqh and Shari'a: the Islamic Approach to Morality

The point of departure for Islamic morality and for Islamic religion itself and the central article of faith from which everything else flows is that God has spoken to man in the Qur'an. Ironically this is the point of agreement as well as of radical divergence between Islam and the religions of Judaism and Christianity. All the three religions accept the Bible as divine revelation. Here Islam and Judaism are in close alliance as opposed to Christianity. As Vernon Ruland says: "Despite recent enmity over the state of Israel, Muslim and Jewish traditionalists share extra-ordinary religious affinities. Pure monotheists and iconoclasts, both reject the notion of an incarnate God as sacrilegious, even self-contradictory. Their spirituality centers on the revealed will of God, essentially as interpreted by a line of respected legal scholars... Each has grudgingly accepted various compromises with secularism, nationalism and socialism in building modern nation-states."¹

But the scandal and division comes when the average Muslim comes to read the Jewish Torah or the Christian New Testament: How can, he asks, God's patriarchs and prophets be portrayed as liars, murderers and fornicators? So Torah must be a corrupt version of the Mosaic original. The four Gospels clearly differing in details show a human tampering with God's unambiguous revelation. So the Qur'an exhorts "the People of the Book", the Jews and Christians, to retain and reinterpret the Bible in the light of the definitive divine revelation through Muhammad. In the final Qur'anic covenant, says, Islam, God links himself definitively, not to a single nation, but to the *umma muslima*, the universal community of believers.

Qur'an, the Word of God

The basic point of Islam is that God is a personal being who communicates his will to human beings, his creatures and servants. The Sura of the Clot, first revealed to the Prophet stated: "Recite thou, in the name of thy Lord who created; Created man from clots of blood, Recite thou! For thy Lord is the most Beneficent, Who taught by the Pen; Hath taught Man that which he knoweth not" (96,1-9). Since they are words addressed by the Creator to his creatures they are the expressions of his will, his precepts for the right conduct of man. As the Sura of the Cow says: "This is the Book, wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the God-fearing, Who believe in the unseen, who observe prayer, and out of what we have bestowed on them, expend for God; And who believe in what hath been sent down to thee, and in what hath been sent down before thee, and full faith have they in the life to come: These are guided by their Lord; and with these it shall be well" (2,1-6).

Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. Since the Qur'an is accepted as God's word it is inimitable and immutable. Even to translate it into any other language is to tamper with God's Word. What the Qur'an is for the Muslims cannot be taken as analogous to the function of the Bible for the Jews and the Christians. For these the Bible is the Word of God in the words of man, and the human authors who wrote under divine inspiration were real authors, and their books have to be judged against their particular religio-cultural background. For Muslims, however, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith points out, the Qur'an fulfils the function of Christ for the Christians, the Word of God made present to man. All experts admit that the Arabic of the Qur'an is rich and forceful, "by turns striking, soaring, vivid, terrible, tender and breath-taking"². And Professor Gibb adds: "No man in fifteen hundred years has ever played on that deep-toned instrument with such power, such boldness, and such range of emotional effect"³. In fact Muhammad in support of the divine origin of the Qur'an challenges believers to produce a Sura (chapter) like those revealed by God to his servant⁴.

Prophetism is a central concept in Islam. Abraham the common mythological ancestor of Semites is considered the

prototype of the Muslim: "Mention in the Book Abraham; surely he was a true man, a Prophet (19,41); "Say: God has spoken the truth; therefore follow the creed of Abraham, a man of pure faith and no idolator" (3,95). Moses is frequently mentioned as a prophet. He was sent to Egypt to rescue the children of Ishmael's nephew, Israel (228,29-43; 2,48-53). Jesus holds a unique place among the prophets of Islam: Sura 3 on the Family of Imran speaks of the angel's annunciation to Mary: "Mary. God gives thee good tidings of a word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, high honoured shall he be in this world and the next, near stationed to God. He shall speak to men in the cradle, and of age, and righteous he shall be" (3,44-46). But the Prophet par excellence sent to give the definitive form of the message is Muhammad. The Sura of Iron describes the sending of the different prophets: "And we sent Noah and Abraham, and We appointed the prophecy and the book to be among their seed... Then we sent following in their footsteps Our Messengers, and We sent Jesus son of Mary and gave unto him the Gospel... O believers, fear God, and believe in his Messenger" (57,26-28). "Muhammad is the Messenger of God", states the Sura of Victory (48,29). Muhammad was not only the prophet but also the founder and lawgiver of the Islamic community. So besides the statements of the Qur'an the Prophet's directives in establishing God's community on earth are considered revelation. They are embodied in the *Hadith*. The *Hadith* transmits the *sunna* or the tradition of the Prophet, illustrating what the prophet might approve of in concrete situations.

Fiqh, understanding

Since the divine revelation was considered the communication of the divine will, Islamic theology was essentially interpretation of Law. The first element in this interpretation was *fiqh* or understanding of what was communicated. There are four major schools of legal interpretation. The Hanbali school which claims Ahmad ibn Hanbal of Baghdad for its founder, follows a strictly fundamentalist interpretation and is opposed to any rational approach to law as exemplified by the *Mu'tazilas*, the later rationalist theologians. The Hanafi school founded by Abu Hanifa took a broader view of reasoned approach and logical consistency. It concentrated on practical

issues as well as on theoretical explanations. The Maliki school founded by Malik bar Anas followed a rigid traditionalism with an uncritical acceptance of *taqlid* or authority. The Shafi'i school founded by Abu Abdallah Muhammad tried to follow a middle course between tradition and reason.

Ibadat or laws of worship

The precepts themselves were distinguished into different categories, those relating to God (*ibadat*), those concerning human relationships (*mu'malat*), and rules of the community and public morality. What are known as the five pillars of Islam relate to worship of God. They are *salat*, daily prayer, *ramdan*, the month of fast, *shahadah*, the recitation of the creed, *zakat*, alms-giving and *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. As Seyyed Hussain Nasr interprets. "The *salat* means to awaken from one's dream of forgetfulness and remember God always. The fast means to die to one's passionate self and be born in purity. The pilgrimage means to journey from the surface to the centre of one's being, for as many sufis have said, the heart is the spiritual kaabah. The *zakat* also implies spiritual generosity and nobility."⁵

Later the concept of *shari'a* to designate the law was introduced. Literally the word means "the path leading to a watering place". It actually means obedience in faith. The general assumption behind it is that human beings are incapable of discriminating between right and wrong by their own unaided powers⁶. *Shari'a* came to stand for the complex web of laws, activities and institutions that contributed to the identity and culture of the Muslim world. "A shared system of law, education, aesthetics, and religious organizations (especially religious fraternities or mystical orders) had assured the growth and continuity of a unifying ethos that cut across the political, ethnic and linguistic boundaries of the Islamicate...Typically, the Sharia served less as a guide to governmental conduct than as a regulator of societal relationships -- of property, business transactions, marriages and public morals."⁷ So a good part of *Shari'a* is *Mu'amalat*, laws concerning human relation, like marriage and divorce.

Islamic sharia was community oriented. Even the metaphors of power indicate this. In non-Islamic languages

contenders for power may rise or fall, they be climbers or rebels. But "in Islam, verbs meaning 'to rise' are commonly used to convey religious, especially mystical experience, but rarely political ascent. Ambitious Muslims move inward rather than upward; rebellious Muslims secede from, rather than rise against, the existing order...Movement is expressed as horizontal, not vertical. The same concept is expressed in the extensive social and political use of the two verbs *jama'a* 'to gather or join', and *faraqa*, to separate or divide. Gathering is good — hence the *jama'a* 'the community' ruled by *ijma*, consensus. Separation is bad, and gives rise to *firqa*, sect and other forms of disunity"⁸.

Obedience is the fundamental response to law and authority. One has to obey God, obey his Prophet and obey those in authority. Duty of obedience is not merely a political expedience but a religious obligation, and so disobedience is a sin as well as a crime. But neither the authority of the ruler nor obedience of the subject is absolute, but conditioned by law. "The Muslim ruler may be and usually is an autocrat, but he is not a despot. His office and his tenure of that office, are established and regulated by the law, by which he is bound no less than is the humblest of his slaves. He may not change that law, in principle it is not even his function to interpret it. His task is to maintain and enforce the law and when possible to extend the area in which it prevails. If he fails in these tasks, still more if he violates the law, then he is in breach of his duty and of the contract with the Muslim community by which he was installed."⁹ Thereby he may lose his authority itself and people will have no obligation to obey him!

The bidding unto God:

Being one's brother's keeper

A rather obnoxious aspect of Islamic understanding of moral law was that Muslims found themselves bound by a prophetic mission to establish and maintain God's law, as they understood it in God's world. Muhammad thought that both Jews and Christians had corrupted their sacred books and distorted divine revelation, so he inveighs against them, warning them about the divine punishment. Islam, just like the Christian church of the age was most cruel against the apostates who defected

from religion. If they did not repent and recant they were put to death and their property confiscated. Next, as the object of *jihad* or holy war comes the unsubjugated unbeliever. From him is sharply distinguished the *dhimmi*, the unbeliever who submits to Muslim rule through *dhimma*, a kind of contract by which members of the non-Muslim community are granted a certain status, with certain duties and privileges under Muslim authority. Still, he is considered a second-class citizen. According to Muslim jurists "the natural and permanent relationship between the world of Islam and the world of the unbelievers was one of open or latent war, and there could, therefore, be no peace and no treaty". According to the precedent provided by the Qur'an only truces and temporary agreements were possible¹⁰. The word *salam* meaning peace and tranquillity in this world and salvation in the next could be used only in addressing a Muslim. In addressing others one should use some other formula derived from the Qur'anic account of Moses' appearance before Pharaoh greeting him with: "Peace be on whosoever follows the guidance [of God]" (20,49).

Sufism

The way out from this rigid legalism of Islam was Sufism which dates from the beginnings of the religious movement. In the very first century after the Hijra, Islam found itself in possession of an empire with the conquest of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and North Africa. The conquered peoples were allowed to retain their religions paying a religious tax, while the conquerors lived separate in their new garrison cities. The more pious members of Islam found this rather anomalous with the simple origins of Islam. As a protest they wore undyed wool (*suf*) and held themselves detached from material life. In this they found inspiration from the Syrian Christian monks, from whom Muhammad himself got good many religious values and principles.

In fact the Sufis were going back to the origins of Islam, studying the sayings of Muhammad and the prophets. As Annemarie Schimmel says: "Sufism has grown organically from the deepest stratum of Islam. The early ascetics in Iraq and Khorasan lived in the constant meditation of the Divine word as revealed in the Qur'an for which they found thousands and

thousands of interpretations."¹¹ Mystical awareness was discerned in Muhammad's attitude to Allah and there are numerous passages of a mystical character in the Qur'an to which the Sufis constantly appealed: "When my servants ask thee concerning me, then will I be neigh unto them. I will answer the cry of him that crieth, when he cries to me. So let them respond to me and let them believe in me; haply so they will go aright." (Sura 2,182) "We indeed created man, and we know what his soul whispers within him, and we are nearer to him than the jugular vein." (Sura 50, 51) Sufi movement connects itself to Muhammad through his cousin and son-in-law Ali ibin Abi Taleb, the fourth caliph whom Muhammad is said to have initiated into the esoteric mysteries by investing him with a cloak or *kherka*. It was Ali's abdication that led to the great schism between the Sunni and the Shi'a¹³.

Like the famous story of the blind men and the elephant recounted by Sanai and Rumi, various people have defined Sufism from various angles. In one extreme view Sufism is simply Neo-Platonism in Arab garb, while for modern Muslim fundamentalists Sufism is unrelated to the general phenomenon of mysticism and is the unique contribution of Islam to spiritual life. There is no doubt that sometimes Sufism went to extremes borrowing from other traditions and became a veritable heresy in Islam. Al-Hallaj was executed (922) when his famous statement "I am the Absolute Truth" was interpreted in a pantheistic sense. But the majority of Sufis were faithful to the genius of Islam. Many of them collected *hadith* and strove to imitate the prophet's actions. They served as transmitters of prophetic traditions. "They compiled handbooks of Sufi ethics which were filled with traditions serving as precedent and example after which the novices were supposed to model their lives." Fraternities and orders were founded by prominent Sufi saints. But they did not espouse celibacy, since Muhammad had said: "There is no monkery in Islam...Marriage is my way."

Though Sufi mysticism has led to pietism and a decline of Islamic culture, on the whole, Sufism as a truly Islamic form of piety has contributed to the deepening of Islamic consciousness. The Sufi saints who were venerated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike broke through the exclusivism of the jurists

and created a universal moral vision common to all believers. Schimmel says: "One can indeed say that the history of Sufism reflects the general history of Islam. The central quest, however, for all Sufis was one. Whether they were ecstatics or sober thinkers, poets or philosophers, dreamers or practical organizers, they all hoped to attain to the secret of the profession of faith, that 'there is no deity save God', and to realize this mystery in their own lives as true witnesses of the Divine unity."¹⁴

Tajdid and Islah: renewal and reform

The dynamic elements in Islamic morality are indicated by the two words *tajdid*, generally translated as "renewal" and *islah*, reform. Since God's word is immutable there is no question of progress or revolution, there is only question of going back to the purity of the original Qur'anic message and reforming the life of people according to it. *Tajdid* is referred back to Muhammad himself who is reported to have said: "God will send to this *ummah* at the head of every century those who will renew its faith for it." The person who brings about this restoration is called *mujaddid*. As the community naturally tends to depart from the path outlined by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the Mujaddid brings about a restoration of the authentic Islamic spirit. Renewal and reform do not indicate any self-conscious innovation nor do they imply messiahs or apocalyptic figures, but are completely scriptural and "are inspired by the example of a past experience rather than impelled by the hope for a future utopia"¹⁵.

In the continuing tradition of Islamic reform history three themes predominate: 1) Call for a return to and application of the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet; 2) the affirmation of the right for an independent analysis (*ijtihad*) of the Qur'an and Sunna in this application; and 3) the reaffirmation of the uniqueness and authenticity of the Qur'anic experience. The second of these constitutes the element of newness: The reformer-renewer claims to make his own judgment based on the independent analysis of revelation. He is not bound by the interpretations and ideas of the teachers and schools of the past, though for most of the Muslim world *taqlid* or authority of past teachers was the accepted method of analysis. As

a result reform and renewal are not traditionalist and conservative attitudes but are often critical of existing institutions and customs and are generally system-challenging. So this is not a going back to the socio-cultural conditions of the seventh century, but rather using the individual effort to apply the Qur'an and the Sunna to the existing conditions. Thus Mummar Qaddafi of Lybia proclaiming strict application of the Qur'an can propose an actual political system quite different from past and existing models both inside and outside Islam !

Conclusion

Theology in the formal sense did not have much influence in the development of Islamic morality. The *Kalam*, the word used for scholastic theology, tried at various stages to interpret Islamic faith through Aristotelian philosophy, and the Hanafi school was most receptive to it. The orthodox Muslims always resisted such moves. One who succeeded to a great extent in the theological pursuit was Abu Hamid al-Ghazall who tried to bring together the Sufi mystics and the legalists. His emphasis on direct religious experience as the vital element in religious knowledge made him criticize both legalistic authoritarianism as well as rationalism. But he also had only a limited influence.

The two poles of Muslim morality are Arabic culture and Islamic faith. What Muhammad did was to substitute for the bond of blood and tribe in the Arab world the bond of faith thereby sublimating the Arab tribal culture. Even today the reaction against the cultural imperialism of the West is a heightened consciousness of Islamic identity rooted in the Arabic culture and Qur'anic faith. All the leading thinkers of Islam like Sayyid Qutb, Abul Ala Mawdudi and Ayatolla Khomeini take the Arab culture for granted and stress the universalism of Islamic faith¹⁶. Perhaps this is both the strength and also the essential weakness of Islam. On the one hand, it goes beyond narrow nationalisms and sees all believers as Muslims. On the other hand, it takes the narrow perspective of Arab culture as the only valid view of human life and of the world and wants to impose it on everyone. Of course, there are those who want to distinguish between Islam and Muslim and attribute the backwardness of Islamic countries to the deviation of Muslims

from the Islamic ideals, and think that a return, to Islam is imperative to progress. Even behind this view is a global condemnation of all other cultures as inferior to their own. Some present Islam as the middle path between Communism and Western imperialism. But the positive contribution of the Islamic approach to morality is that human life cannot be compartmentalized into religious and secular sections. Human life has to be taken as one and religion embraces the whole of it.

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Foot Notes

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- 3 H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism*. 2nd ed., New York, 1953, p. 37.
- 4 Sura of the Cow (Qur'an) 2,25, Sura stands for chapters in the Qur'an, 114 in number, some very short and some rather long
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- 8 Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*: Chicago Univ. Press, 1988, p. 13.
- 9 *Ibid*, p. 91. 10 *Ibid*, p. 78.
- 11 Annemarie Schimmel, "Aspects of Mystical Thought in Islam", *The Islamic Impact*, pp. 113-136.
- 12 *Ibid*, p. 114
- 13 *Muslim Saints and Mystics*, trs. A. J. Arberry: Chicago Univ. Press, 1966, Intro. p. 3.
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- 15 John O Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid and Islah*", *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito, New York. Oxford Univ. Press, 1983, pp. 32-47.
- 16 *Voices of Resurgent Islam*.